WORLD / A19

Award-winning historian, JFK insider Arthur Schlesinger, dies at 89

BUSINESS / B1

Nestlé invests P1.3B for RP expansion to meet rising demand

NEWS / A2

Kris Aquino taken to hospital with severe contractions

LIVING STARS / I2

Filmmaker Maryo J. de los Reyes opens the doors to his rest house in Pansol, Laguna

Serge O is new GO campaign manager

SERGE OSMEÑA

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Norman Bordadora

LAST-TERM SEN. SERGIO Osmeña III will replace San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito as the campaign manager of the Genuine Opposition.

SERGE/ A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, March 2, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 84 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Mr. Big Spender: I'm like 'a pechay in full bloom'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE ELECTION'S BIGgest spender so far is unapologetic about shelling out more than P16 million a week for television ads, claiming it is money

MR. BIG SPENDER/ A6

GANYAN BA KAMAHAL ITANIM YAN?

LP warns GO: Stop at 11

Gonzalez blamed for canceled GO rally in Iloilo

By Norman Bordadora and Leila B. Salaverria

ILOILO CITY—JUSTICE SECRETARY Raul Gonzalez is suspected of having been behind the purported barrage of text warnings that caused the cancellation of the Genuine Opposition rally here on Wednesday night.

"It's very possible that he (Gonzalez) was behind those text messages," Gov. Niel Tupas told the INQUIRER of the late-afternoon messages warning of "violence" should the rally, GO's first major out-of-town sortie, push through in front of the provincial capitol.

Tupas' chief confidant, provincial administrator Manuel Mejorada, was definite about naming the justice secretary as being responsible for the scuttling of the rally.

"The mayor (Iloilo Mayor Jerry Treñas) had nothing to do with it. Gonzalez has his own people to do such things. Besides, he has a track record of preventing the political activities [in Iloilo] of anti-administration people," Mejorada said.

Sources in the GO camp said that as early

GONZALEZ/ A13

Docs say political medical missions dangerous to health

By Tessa Salazar

CAN POLITICS AND MEDICAL MISsions mix?

Ask any aspirant for elective seats in the May balloting. Chances are the politician will consider squeezing in a medical mission or two in his campaign sorties.

It can be seen as a win-win situation for the candidate and the beneficiary. The former gets the vote, the latter gets health care, or so it seems.

Doctors, however, have a different take on it. They stress that medical missions done "from the hip" can be dangerous. They also urge people to ask about the proper use of drugs given out during such politicized medical missions.

This was the appeal of doctors at the Philippine College of Physicians forum on health care on Thursday.

The physicians said that medical missions were undermining health care delivery as people just line up for medicines for future use and organizers often nei-

DOCS/ A6

BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE? Led by Victor Wood, KBL Senate bets sing their hearts out at a campaign sortie in a public market in Davao City on Thursday. The "choir" members are, from left, Mel Chaves, Oliver Lozano, Wood, Ruben Enciso, Joselito "Peter" Cayetano and Ed Orpilla. KBL was Marcos' vintage political party during the glory days of the "New Society."

Kapatiran shows how to campaign 'slowly, surely and profoundly'

By Christian V. Esguerra

A TRIO OF MIDDLE-AGED MEN wearing campaign vests motored around town to quiet response from vendors and bystanders probably looking for familiar faces.

But not one could be seen in Dr. Martin Bautista and lawyers Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison, the senatorial candidates of Ang Kapatiran, a political party founded by a Christian lay group three years ago.

Instead, the public was given a good dose of Kapatiran's platform of bringing back sense and God in Philippine politics.

Thus, after introducing themselves as "anti-trapo" candidates, the three were warmly embraced not unlike long-time politicians with prominent names and political clout. But none of them has had any significant experience in Philippine elections, more so in running a senatorial campaign.

Still, Bautista, Paredes and Sison aren't exactly doing badly. In fact, their political sorties appear more organized than the much-ballyhooed—but seemingly troubled—campaign of the Genuine Opposition.

"Our campaign is done slowly, surely and profoundly," Paredes told the INQUIRER yesterday, as the group prepared for another foray to the provinces.

They have so far covered Metro Manila, Bacolod, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Bukidnon and Davao—not bad for

KAPATIRAN / A6

LP Drilon wing to continue rooting for Kiko

By Dona Pazzibugan

A FACTION OF THE LIBERAL Party reminded leaders of the Genuine Opposition yesterday of their "agreement" not to get another candidate to replace Sen. Francis Pangilinan on the 12-member slate.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, president of an LP wing, said the party had an agreement with the GO leadership "that there will only be 11 senatorial candidates that shall be carried by the GO campaign machinery."

The GO leadership had decided to officially drop Pangilinan from the slate as a "guest candidate." His replacement is seriously being considered. Which translates into a 13th candidate on the GO slate, as far as Drilon's LP is concerned.

"We expect the GO and former Sen. Ernesto Maceda and (Makati) Mayor (Jejomar) Binay to respect our agreement that the GO will field only 11 candidates in order that the LP can campaign without hindrance for the candidacy of Sen. Kiko Pangilinan as its 12th candidate," Drilon said.

Maceda, an opposition senior leader, said it was Senate President Manuel Villar who consented in behalf of Pangilinan to deposed President Joseph Estrada's offer that they be adopted by the opposition as "guest candidates."

Maceda said the agreement was sealed on Feb. 10, or two days before the deadline for the filing of candidacies for senatorial candidates, during Villar's visit to Estrada at his estate where he is under detention in Tanay, Rizal.

"We considered his acceptance as good for him and Kiko (Pangilinan)," said Maceda.

Drilon said the LP "did not ask for (Pangilinan's) inclusion" as a guest candidate in the first place, although another party member, Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, was already on the slate.

LP WARNS/ A13

Noynoy also campaigning for Mar as president in 2010

By Christian V. Esguerra

OUTGOING TARLAC REP. BENIGNO "Noynoy" Aquino III yesterday turned his senatorial campaign into a preview of the 2010 presidential election.

Aquino, who is running on the Genuine Opposition ticket, announced that the Liberal Party would field incumbent Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II as its standard bearer in the presidential election three years from now.

"We in the Liberal Party will be the dominant political party by 2011 and we intend to present to the national electorate Sen. Mar Roxas who will stand as the symbol of good governance based on principled politics," he said in a speech during a sortie in Western Visayas.

The Liberal Party is divided into two camps—the faction of Sen. Franklin Drilon, which broke away from the administration coalition in 2005 after it called for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and the one of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Aquino, who belongs to the Drilon wing of the LP, was ostensibly trying to court votes for GO candidates in Senator Roxas' bailiwick, Roxas City, in Capiz.

He later called on local residents in a statement to rally behind the Liberal Party to "bring another Roxas to Malacañang in 2010."

The senator's grandfather, Manuel Roxas, was the country's president from May 1946 to April 1948.

Aquino said he wanted to join LP Senators Drilon, Roxas, Francis Pangilinan and Rodolfo Biazon so they could ensure that there would be a presidential election three years from now.

"President Arroyo's obsession with survival weakens our democratic institu-

NOYNOY/ A13

Money, personal differences split RP 1st Mt. Everest team

By Alcuin Papa

PERSONAL AND MONEY PROBLEMS HAVE split into two the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition Team, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

But the two groups are still intent on pushing through with their plans to assault Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak, during this year's climbing season beginning in May.

One team will be led by co-expedition leader Arturo Valdez and will be composed of Everest summiteers Leo Oracion and Pastour Emata, Fred Jamili, female members Noelle Wenceslao, Karina Dayondon and Janet Belarmino, and the team's physician Dr. Ted Esguerra.

This team will be climbing from the south side of Everest. It will be led by Oracion and Emata who reached the peak last year.

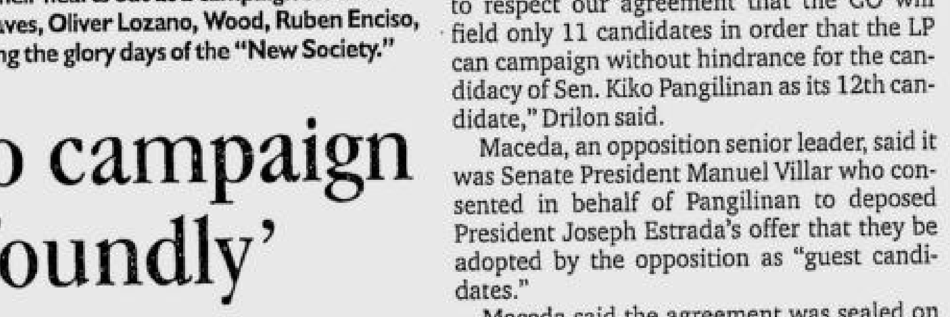
Another team will be composed of co-expedition leader Butch Sebastian and members Regie Pablo, Jong Narciso, Choy Aquino, Levi Nahayangan, JB Anonuevo, Larry Honoridez and Ariel Ambayec. This team is said to be climbing the north side of Everest.

Earlier, the INQUIRER reported that Valdez had resigned from the team after allegedly failing to account for some of its funds and for unauthorized disbursements. He reportedly resented the questioning and announced that he was retiring to take care of his ailing mother.

"We were surprised to find out that he (Valdez) was already setting up the other group and that he himself wanted to climb.

MONEY/ A6

GO BETWEEN: **President Arroyo is sandwiched between Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Dick Hunter, vice president of Dell Philippines, which is the US computer maker's local contact center, during the inauguration of Dell's second hub in the country at Eastwood Cyberspace in Libis, Quezon City. Dell has started recruiting people for its Quezon City site, which will have a workforce of 1,200. (*Story on Page B2*).** JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region and eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/01/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Market rout can't touch RP – GMA

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY said the economy had become too strong to be threatened by a one-day global stock market rout.

"World markets may go up and down, but the Philippine economy can no longer be pulled back," the President said.

On Wednesday, China's stocks tumbled in the biggest one-day plunge in a decade, triggering a global sell-off of shares. The Philippines suffered a 7.92 percent slump in share prices.

The President said the stock market drop-off had "very little effect" on the overall performance of the economy.

"Yesterday we lost about 200 points. Today we gained a hundred plus and the analysts know that the fundamentals of growth are firmly laid down," she said, just after the stock market showed signs of a recovery with a 4 percent rebound earlier yesterday.

Ms Arroyo said the growth of the economy was rooted in good governance, fiscal stability, investments and enterprise at the grassroots and a "vibrant democratic system."

"Add to these the excellence and hard work of more than 8 million Filipinos abroad and we have a solid picture of economic stability relatively impervious to the vagaries and glitches in the world economy," she said.

These strong fundamentals are firm and "cannot be overcome easily in a single sweep," she said.

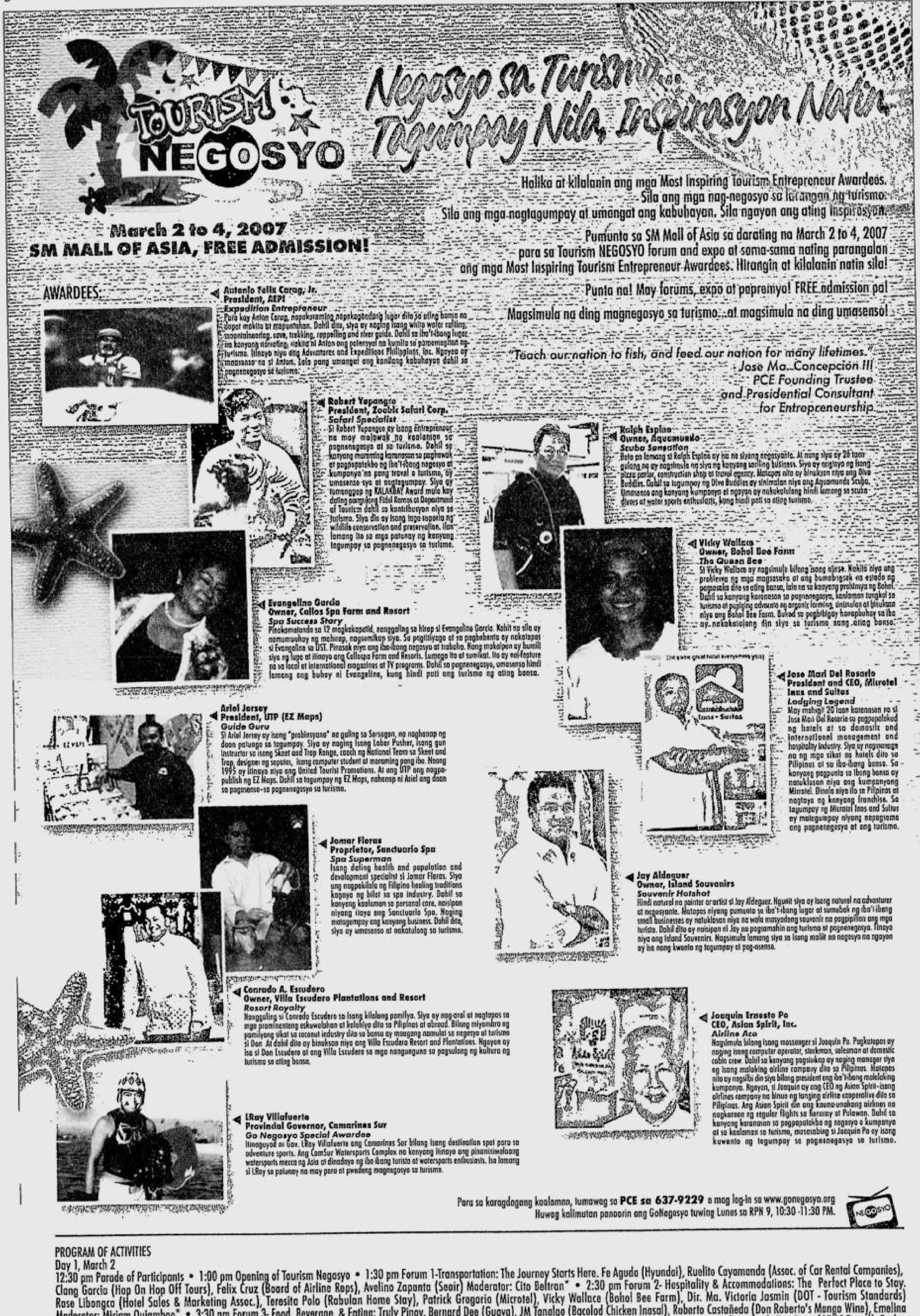
"And we also have to take into consideration the resiliency of the whole region, including China, in making a rapid comeback from the most recent drop in the bourse," she said.

"Confidence in the Philippines and in the region is unsullied. Sustained growth will carry the day," Ms Arroyo said.

The President appealed for unity in an election season in which her performance and claims of economic gains are being questioned.

Ms Arroyo is sensitive to criticisms that the economic gains have not trickled down to the majority of Filipinos.

Opening the Dell Philippines Customer Contact Center in Libis, Quezon City yesterday, the President singled out Andrew Tan, chair of Megaworld Corp., whom she described as the "landlord of all these call centers." *Juliet Labog-Javellana*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Vicky Wallace
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Evangeline Garcia
Owner, Callos Spa Farm and Resort
Spa Success Story
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Huwag kalimutan panoorin ang GoNegosyo tuwing Lunes sa RPN 9, 10:30 -11:30 PM.

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES
Day 1, March 2
12:30 pm Parade of Participants • 1:00 pm Opening of Tourism Negosyo • 1:30 pm Forum 1-Transportation: The Journey Starts Here. Fe Aguda (Hyundai), Ruelito Cayamanda (Assoc. of Car Rental Companies), Clang Garcia (Hop On Hop Off Tours), Felix Cruz (Board of Airline Reps), Avelino Zapanta (Seair) Moderator: Cito Beltran* • 2:30 pm Forum 2- Hospitality & Accommodations: The Perfect Place to Stay. Rose Libongco (Hotel Sales & Marketing Assoc.), Teresita Polo (Rabulan Home Stay), Patrick Gregorio (Microtel), Vicky Wallace (Bohol Bee Farm), Dir. Ma. Victoria Jasmin (DOT - Tourism Standards) Moderator: Miriam Quiambao* • 3:30 pm Forum 3- Food, Beverage, & Eating: Truly Pinoy. Bernard Dee (Guava), JM Tanalgo (Bacolod Chicken Inasal), Roberto Castañeda (Don Roberto's Mango Wine), Emelina Lopez (Bureau of Animal Industries) Moderator: Cory Quirino* • 4:30 pm Special Forum 1-How To's of Starting a Business Dr. Corazon Rodriguez (Asian Institute of Tourism), Eric Papa (GTMC Travel), Evelyn Pantig (School of Tourism - PWU), Lorenzo Yatco (CY Learning Tools), Ma. Victoria Magcalas (DTI-BSMED) Moderator: Marlo Sanchez
Day 2, March 3
12:00 nn Awarding Ceremony: Ten Most Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneurs 2:00 pm Forum 4-Tour Activities & Signtseeing: Leisure & Pleasure within My Fingertips. Cathy Brillantes (Nurture Spa), Anya Santos (Haribon), Savador Adrao (Donsol Municipal Tourism Office, Jojo Clemente III (PTAA), Gov. LRay Villafuerte (CamSur Watersports Complex), Donna Reyes (Miriam Environmental Studies Institute), Anton Carag (Chico River Adventure) Moderators: Eco & Chal of Go Negosyo BIGTIME • 3:15 pm Forum 5-OTOP: Shop Til You Drop! Tita Padilla Diego (Balikbayan Handicrafts), Jay Aldeguer (Islands Souvenirs), Narda Capuyon (Narda's), Alice Guerrero (Tesoro's), Lydia Lomibao (J. Emmanuel Pastries), Ana Gotdalera (Analobel Enterprises) Moderator: Cito Beltran* Convenor: DTI Usec. Carissa Cruz- Evangelista • 4:15 pm Forum 6-Marketing & Tourism: Niches, Trends, Promotions, & More Opportunities DOT Usec. Oscar Palabyab, Dir. Daniel Corpuz (PCVC), Marisa Nallana (PACEOS) Moderator: Cherry Mercado*
Day 3, March 4
2:00 pm Region Presentations • 5:00 pm Teenpreneur/ GK Presentations
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Kris back in hospital; game show sub sought

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

FOR THE SECOND TIME IN TWO WEEKS, television host Kris Aquino was rushed to the Makati Medical Center Wednesday night after experiencing "severe contractions."

This was confirmed to the INQUIRER by Aquino's friends, her manager Deo Endrinal and her "The Buzz" co-host Boy Abunda.

"After taping [the noontime game show] 'Game KNB,' Kris experienced stomach pains between 9 and 10 p.m. [Wednesday]. From the studio, she went straight to the hospital. She's now under observation," Endrinal said in a phone interview yesterday.

Abunda told the INQUIRER Aquino was resting in the hospital: "This time it was work-related."

Exactly one week ago, Aquino was rushed to the same hospital with "false labor" pains brought on by stress after a beauty clinic receptionist, Hope Centeno, went on TV to reveal an alleged 10-month affair with her husband, basketball star James Yap.

Mood swings

Her doctors then had recommended that Aquino spend at least three days at the hospital in order to get some rest.

Upon checking out of the hospital, however, Aquino and Yap headed to the taping of an exclusive interview with Korina Sanchez over ABS-CBN to rebut Centeno's claims. One source said the taping lasted until the wee hours of Sunday.

Two days later, Aquino attended a press conference for a cooking product, where she unleashed a mouthful on the scandal—berating Centeno and hinting that she was moving out of the conjugal home in Makati to go back to her mother's—former President Corazon Aquino—house in Quezon City.

"She's very hardworking," Abunda told the INQUIRER in a phone interview Tuesday night. "These days, however, her mood swings are very wild. Sometimes she's laughing. Other times, she's crying in one corner. It must be because of the difficult pregnancy and the intrigues."

According to Endrinal, this time the doctors ordered "at least one week's rest. But this could still change, stretching from one week to one month, depending on the doctors' findings and how she responds to medication."

He said that "mom Cory is now watching over Kris at the hospital. James was also with her last night. If I am not mistaken, from an event for his basketball team [Purefoods] he went to the hospital."

Endrinal said he was not certain if Joshua, Aquino's son by actor Phillip Salvador, was also at the hospital. "They might not want him to be there," he said.

Search for pinch-hitter

Endrinal, who is also Business Unit Head at ABS-CBN, said the network was looking for "a temporary replacement for Kris on 'Game KNB?'"

"Definitely, she can't appear on 'The Buzz' this Sunday. She has taped for 'Game' only until Monday next week. We need to find the right person who can pinch-hit for her until the doctors give the go-signal," Endrinal said.

With the latest development, Dr. Vicki Belo, owner of the clinic where Yap and Centeno allegedly had their trysts, told the INQUIRER that while everyone seemed "obsessed with the latest rumors, few have shown concern for Kris' unborn child."

"As a doctor, I know the stress a mother undergoes is passed on to the baby. That's why I was so upset with my former employee who had pushed Hope to come out with her false claims on national television," Belo said in a phone interview Wednesday night.

Earlier, Belo had said that a former disgruntled employee was using Centeno to "destroy me... and Hope, Kris and James are just unwitting victims in this conspirator's personal vendetta against me. I pity Hope most of all because she is totally ruined because of this controversy."

GMA forms climate change task force

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has created a presidential task force on climate change to better prepare the country for the adverse effects of rising global temperatures.

The President has issued Executive Order 171, to take effect after its publication, that seeks to address and mitigate the disastrous consequences of climate change, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

He said it would make the country be better prepared for the natural disasters that are expected to occur because of climate change.

Ermita said one of the indications of climate change was the phenomenon called El Niño which has brought drought conditions to several areas of the country, resulting in lower crop yields.

Ermita said the executive order was issued in the wake of a report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released last February.

He said the Philippines, being an archipelagic country located in the typhoon belt, was highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

The exhaustive report of 2,500 scientists revealed that the global temperatures would continue to rise towards 2100. In the short term, temperatures will rise by about 1.4 to 5.8 Celsius, leading to an increase in sea levels from 18 to 59 centimeters by 2010.

According to scientists, even a small rise in temperature will be accompanied by changes in climate, the consequences of which could vary from disruptive to catastrophic for millions of people dependent on weather patterns.

The report said that global warming was almost certainly 90 percent caused by human activity and and would be unstoppable for years to come.

The report said manmade emissions of the so-called greenhouse gases could already be blamed for current problems: fewer cold days, hotter nights, killer heat waves, floods and heavy rains, devastating droughts and an increase in hurricane and tropical storm strength.

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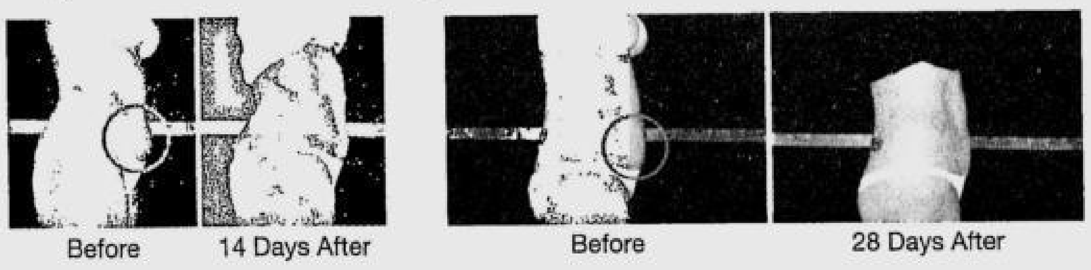

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Comelec: We alone can organize debate

By Michael Lim Ubac and Nikko Dizon

THE RIVAL TEAM UNITY AND GENuine Opposition senatorial tickets have challenged each other to a debate but they have yet to ask the Commission on Elections to organize it, according to a Comelec official.

Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez said it was the poll body that had the authority to organize the debate and set the rules for it.

"If they want to hold it in Plaza Miranda, then I recommend that they come to the Comelec and ask us to organize that," Jimenez said.

This would help ensure that that the debate is conducted "in a professional manner and will not be used to the advantage of either party," Jimenez explained.

Jimenez said the rules may be drawn up by other parties but they still would have to be approved by the Comelec.

The poll body itself will have a televised Comelec Hour, to start on March 12, in which candidates will be given a chance to present their case to the voters.

The show is being organized with the help of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), the Comelec's citizen's arm for voter education.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said the administration welcomed a debate with the opposition "in a place and under rules that are mutually agreed upon."

GO campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano has accepted Chief of Staff Joey Salceda's challenge the other day, but said the debate should be conducted in an open setting, like Plaza Miranda.

Salceda issued the challenge on Tuesday, after GO came out with a full-page advertisement in several dailies giving the lie to the administration's vaunted economic gains.

The ad claimed that economic growth was higher during the "truncated" regime of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Salceda said the opposition had chosen the wrong forum, economic issues, to pick a fight with the President.

"They are just leading themselves into their own dungeon by that publication," he said. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

TALK SHOW
Opposition senatorial candidate Loren Legarda campaigns in the medium she is familiar with—the radio—during a foray into Roxas City Thursday. Legarda, a former broadcaster, and her partymates have taken to visiting radio stations to air their message after their rally in Iloilo was canceled on Tuesday. REM ZAMORA

ELECTION '07

Unity Team takes new campaign tack

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., *Manila,* **and Carla P. Gomez,** *Inquirer Visayas*

TEAM UNITY KICKED OFF ITS NEW CAMPAIGN strategy yesterday with its 12 senatorial candidates fanning out to cities and towns in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao for maximum coverage to reach the greatest number of voters.

The coalition broke up into three groups that headed for Laguna, Negros Occidental and Misamis Oriental armed with video presentations and projector screens under its "pulong-sulong" [town hall meetings] campaign strategy.

At the Laguna starting point of the Luzon caravan, the restaurant was festooned with banners of all the Team Unity candidates, not just of the four bets covering the region – Miguel Zubiri, Prospero Pichay, Cesar Montano and Sultan Jamalul Kiram III of Sulu.

Zubiri described the "pulong-sulong" as "intelligent campaigning" using high-tech video technology to get their message across for the least cost and time.

"The first day was a success, albeit very tiring, because we were in direct contact with all the local leaders. It is a new experience because we were closer to our audience and not far from them on a stage like before," he said.

In Bacolod City in Negros Occidental, Michael Defensor, who was covering the Visayas with Edgardo Angara and Vic Magsaysay, said: "We are a team united not only in words but in actions. We campaign not only for ourselves but for all of the team members."

"The people appreciated the campaign, it was more interactive," said Ralph Recto who was in Cagayan de Oro City in Misamis Oriental with Joker Arroyo, Tessie Aquino-Oreta, Luis "Chavit" Singson and Vicente "Tito" Sotto for the Mindanao leg.

Newly appointed Team Unity media chief, Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, said the "pulong-sulong" started off within expectations although there were some expected kinks at the start.

"We expect to move like a well-oiled machine as we go deeper into the campaign," Evardone said.

The new strategy means there would be no big crowds and movie stars.

Instead, the candidates go directly to the people wherever they are, in malls and markets, and huddle with community leaders in "town hall" meetings.

Angara, assigned to Pontevedra and Hinigaran towns in Negros Occidental, said in the town hall meetings, a candidate will meet with about 200 key leaders of a community to explain the party's platform and answer questions.

"This way we can be more issues oriented, unlike in big rallies where speeches end up being superficial," he said.

"In big rallies, the crowds are usually local supporters brought in by local political allies, so it is like preaching to the choir," he said.

Magsaysay and Defensor held separate town hall meetings in other towns in southern Negros Occidental.

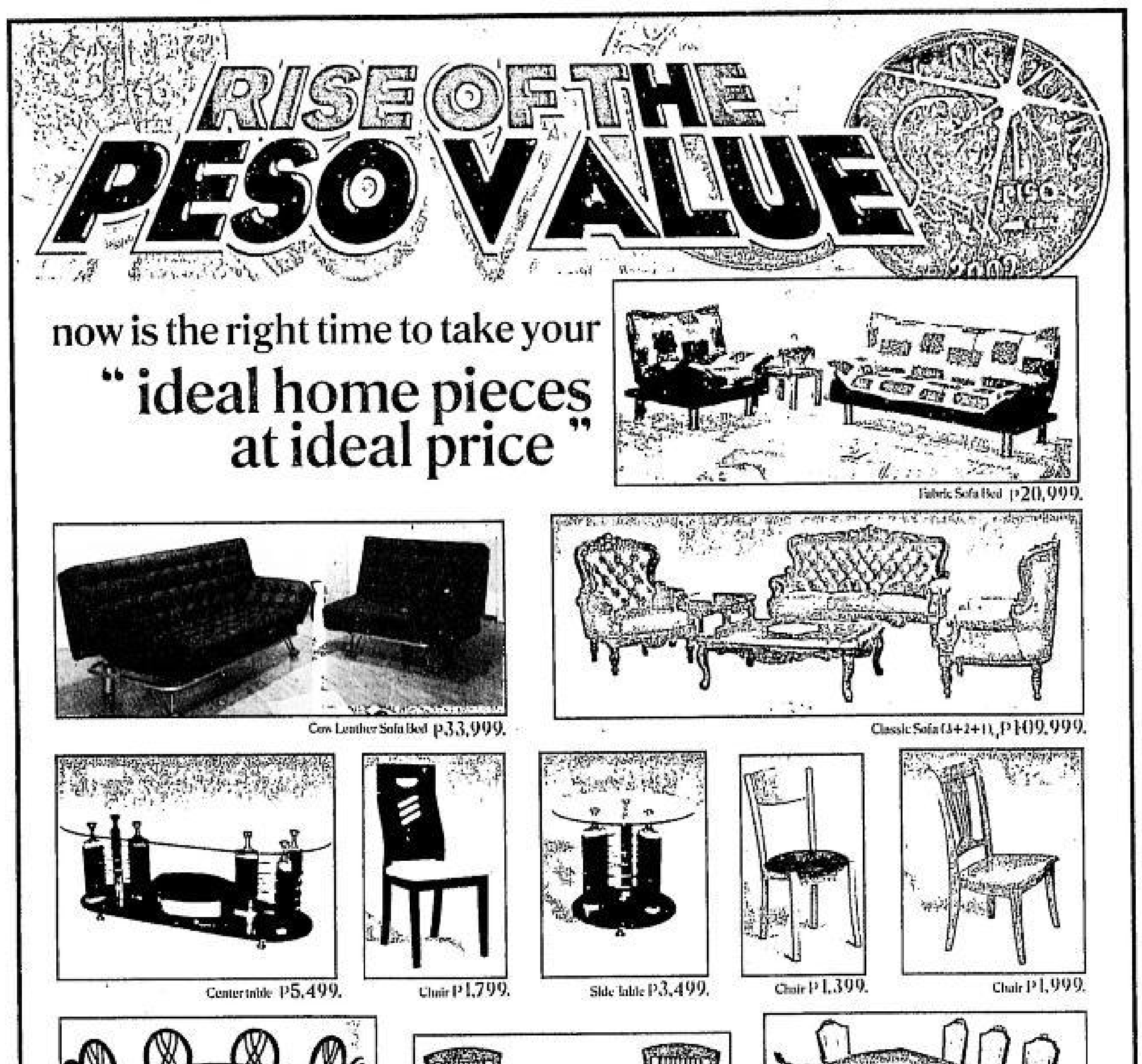
Angara said they would move on to Negros Oriental on Saturday.

Singson was supposed to be with the group but he went to Cagayan de Oro City instead.

At the end of the week, all 12 candidates will meet to report on their experiences and assess the effectivity of the strategy, Angara said.

Angara, in a press conference in Bacolod before going off to his town hall meetings, called on the government to provide the infrastructure to make Negros Occidental the nation's center for ethanol production and the regional center for call centers and other outsourcing jobs.

"Bacolod City has awesome natural assets and a vast pool of highly educated and highly trained manpower. It is a highly competitive city based on the established benchmarks of competitiveness. The government's role should focus on enhancing those awesome assets," he said.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For now, Pacquiao lets his fists do the talking

By Tarra Quismundo

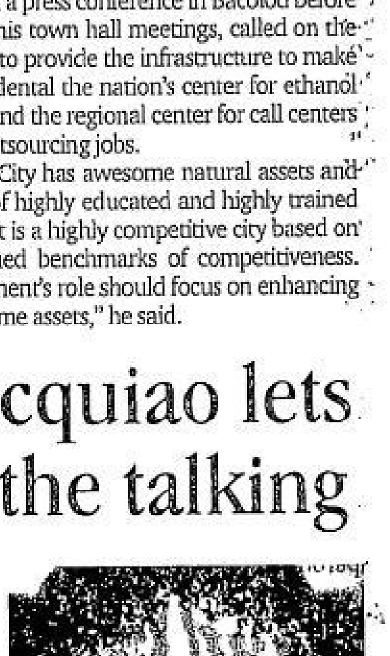
HIS LIPS ARE NOW SEALED WHEN it comes to politics, but talk about boxing and Filipino champion Manny Pacquiao waxes optimistic about his coming fight next month—weeks before the May elections.

In an interview at the domestic wing of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Centennial Terminal yesterday, Pacquiao, who had expressed an intent to run for Congress in his native General Santos City, assured his fans he was focused on nothing else but his fight against Mexican Jorge Solis on April 21 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Only last November, Pacquiao knocked down another Mexican fighter, Erik Morales, midway through a 12-round bout in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"Of course, we will still win... They (fans) should not worry because right now, I am training diligently," Pacquiao said. He had just arrived from General Santos at noon yesterday when airport reporters chanced upon him.

"Let's not talk about politics yet, there's time to talk about that. Let's just talk about boxing," he said in Filipino.



PACQUIAO: No political talk

Last week, mixed signals came out of different camps regarding Pacquiao's political ambitions. Long-time friend and mentor Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said he was able to convince Pacquiao to give up any political plans and concentrate on his boxing career.

Almost immediately, Pacquiao countered that he was keeping his political options open but would concentrate on his coming fight for the meantime.

Yesterday, he chose not to talk politics at all.

Sports pundits and boxing fans have been very vocal in their opposition to Pacquiao's entering the political ring. The boxer is set to leave for the United States soon to continue training for his coming fight.

Army captain separated from coup co-accused

By Christine O. Avendano

LANGKIT

MILITARY AUTHORITIES have separated an Army captain from fellow military officers who like him are standing trial on charges of mounting last year's coup attempt, apparently for his own safety.

While 25 Scout Rangers and Marine officers were transferred to faraway Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal early this week, Army Capt. Dante Langkit remains locked up at the Civilian management Unit inside Fort Bonifacio.

Langkit was in the news early this week when he wrote Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., asking his forgiveness "for any disappointment" he might have caused the latter.

He also asked Esperon that he be allowed to campaign in Kalinga where he intended to run for congressman.

For security

Esperon said he had deliberately ordered Langkit's separation from the rest of the group that included Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda and Scout Ranger commander Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim"as part of a security arrangement."

But he denied that Langkit, who once served as a member of his close-in security detail when he was then chief of the AFP Special Operations Command, faced peril.

"It's just that some people with the group might have misinterpreted him. So we want to avoid any physical contacts for the meantime," the AFP chief told reporters.

He acknowledged that the move followed Langkit's letter of apology, which he said he had not yet read.

"Since there was the letter, that might have been taken against him by some people who do not see the aspect of our personal relations," Esperon said.

Apology

Asked whether Langkit was cooperating with the military in the coup attempt investigation, Esperon said he did not know but added that anyone who wished to do so was welcome to do so.

Asked whether he accepted Langkit's apology, he replied: "Who am I not to forgive? But ... this is no longer a personal matter. The rule of law, the military justice system has to take its due course."

He said he considered Langkit's apology to be a "very humbling" experience. He added it spoke well of Langkit and "how professional we were in dealing with one another."

As for Langkit's request that he be allowed to campaign, he said he had yet to look at its legal implications.

But he said that once the court martial proceeded to hear Langkit's case, "he may not be allowed to."

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Docs say political medical missions dangerous to health

From page A1

ther gather medical histories nor follow up on patients.

"We know very well that self-medication is not really a good thing," said Dr. Lulu C. Bravo, executive director of the National Institute of Health (NIH), University of the Philippines Manila. "Most of the time, they will come to the clinic in a very bad state because they have been self-medicating."

Vaccination most effective

"If politicians would really like to help the community, the best way is to come up with preventive aspects. What are these? Deworm the community, a good way to prevent nutritional disorders. Give them vaccinations, for measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and tetanus toxoid for pregnant women so their unborn children would not suffer from tetanus neonatorum," said Bravo.

"Vaccination is the most effective preventive measure for children and adults. Politicians can also direct educational training for barangay health workers. Medical missionaries can do one-day seminars on proper food and nutrition, teach the value of planting vegetables. These should be the medical missions," said Bravo.

Bravo said that if politicians wanted to just donate drugs, these should be given to local centers. Trained barangay health center personnel can then give patients the right dosages of the medicines, and make follow-ups.

Dr. Jaime C. Montoya, executive director of the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, said some politicians might even be getting these medicines donated by private companies from health centers and handing them out as their own.

Montoya added: "Because they want to give as many as they can to as many people, what they do is they just give one or two tablets to each person."

He stressed that this would not be the right way to treat diseases.

"If there was an infection, for example, and you just gave two or three doses of the antibiotic, it would even favor the development of resistance (to the medicine). The purpose of the medicine is lost," he explained.

Invest in GKare

Dr. Fely Marilyn Lorenzo, execom member, Institute of Health Policy and Development Studies at the UP Manila's NIH, said medical missions were simply politicians' PR shows." She said they should not be promoted at all. "It promotes bad use of health resources."

"The politicians don't administer the drugs themselves, but they bring doctors with them, who in turn tell the beneficiaries that these medicines came from this party or that. Health becomes politicized, which could lead to a dangerous health situation," Lorenzo said.

Lorenzo appealed to politicians to invest in Gawad Kalinga's health care program GKare or other similar programs. Lorenzo helped set up the program.

GKare, Lorenzo explained, is a community-based health program started by faculty members at the UP College of Public Health. In the GKare system, health programs are planned based on surveys that show the percentage of a certain locale's population that are suffering from specific diseases such as tuberculosis and hypertension. Interventions could then be carried out based on the plans.

Kapatiran shows how to campaign ...

From page A1

their party that boasts neither political machinery nor hefty campaign funds.

Word of mouth

Many have gotten wind of Ang Kapatiran and its platform of God-centered politics from intermittent newspaper articles, sporadic advertisements and by word of mouth.

So far, many of the campaign sorties have been arranged by parish-based organizations and cause-oriented groups.

Among these groups are the Basic Ecclesial Communities, parish units that can be as small as three Catholics. In many provinces, BECs are more ubiquitous, particularly in areas hardly reached by parish priests.

Another group is the Democratic Alliance of Mindanaoans for Good Government, which purportedly has a strength of around 50,000.

In the absence of massive political rallies, Paredes said Kapatiran candidates have been banking on small- or mid-sized gatherings.

Overcoming resistance

"The initial attitude of people we meet is usually that of resistance to the platform that we're trying to promote," he admitted. "But after they hear what we have to say, they realize that what they've been looking for is embodied by our party."

Kapatiran founder and campaign manager Nandy Pacheco said his party was trying to build a "critical mass" that would embrace its ideals. "So far, we feel it's already happening because people are beginning to talk about change."

ALL BY THEIR LONESOME 3: At their proclamation rally last week, Kapatiran's senatorial candidates offered an alternative to the administration and the opposition Senate slates. From left are Adrian Sison, Martin Bautista and Zosimo Paredes.

JOAN BONDOC

Paredes, who lost his government job for criticizing the midnight transfer without a court order of an American Marine convicted late last year of raping a Filipino woman, said the initial success of the Kapatiran gatherings had boosted the idea of "a silent majority wanting to change government and traditional politicians."

Paredes is a longtime career official involved in peace initiatives before and during the Arroyo administration. Sison is a lawyer specializing in taxation and family law. Bautista practiced for 17 years in the United States as a gastroenterologist before moving his family back to Manila last year.

Paredes' relative prominence might have captured the attention of the Genuine Opposition. There have been reports that the group was considering drafting the Philippine Military Academy graduate to take the place of the estranged Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

No go to GO

Asked if he would accept an invitation to join GO, he said doing so would go against his principles and that of Kapatiran.

"We are fighting for a politics of virtue and a politics of duty that will put God above all else," he said. "If I join them, it would appear that I'm embracing a politics of convenience. Nobody would believe me anymore. Everything that I've been fighting for will crumble."

As the administration's Team Unity and GO continue to engage in political mudslinging, Kapatiran "will walk in the middle and get noticed," he said. "They will cancel each other out and the people will realize that there really is a genuine alternative."

Money, personal differences ...

From page A1

He tells us one thing during the meetings and does a different thing. He could be washing his hands or saving face, whatever it is," one team member told the INQUIRER but did not want to be named.

The INQUIRER tried to interview Valdez but he did not answer his cell phone or respond to text messages.

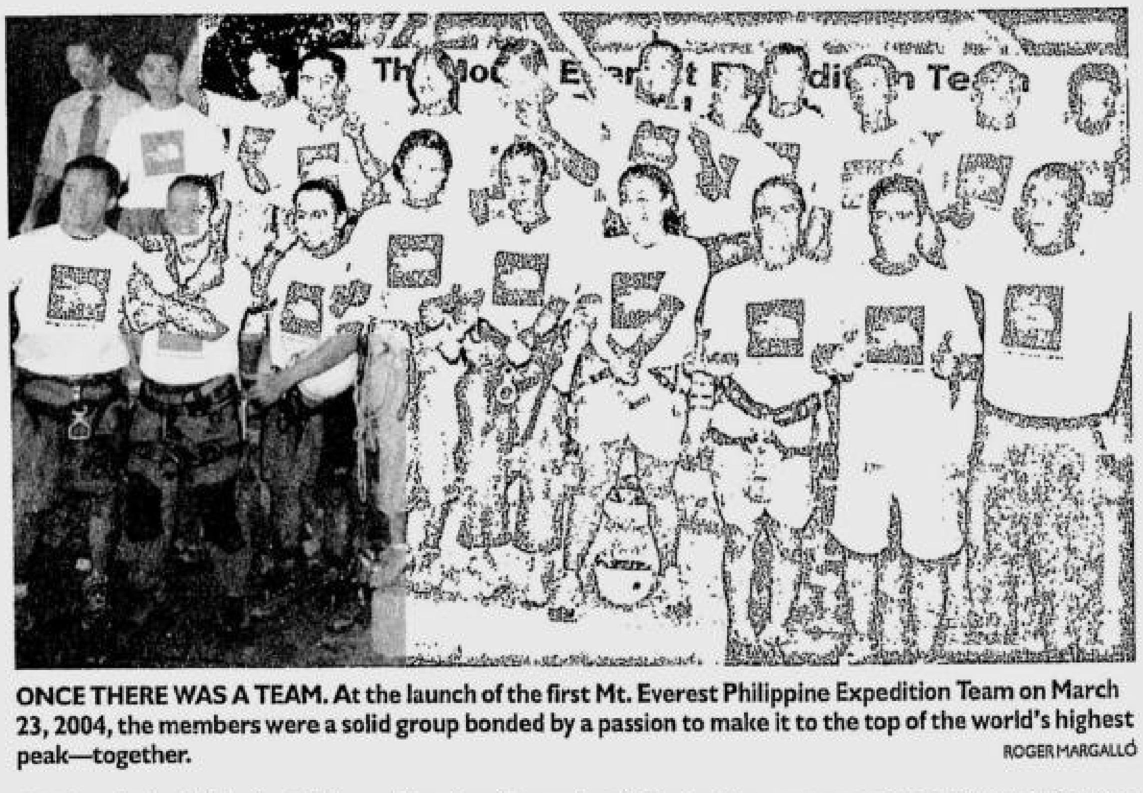
Conflicting statements

Another reason for the split, according to team members, was the different statements made by Valdez. At one point, he announced that because of a fund shortage, only the female members would make the climb.

TV network ABS-CBN has started to market the expedition as an attempt to put the first Asean woman on Everest. Indonesian Clara Sumawati was said to have reached the peak of Everest in 1996 but the reported feat was later disputed, mountaineers told the INQUIRER.

But Regie Pablo, who's with the Sebastian team, wanted to include the other male members in this year's attempt, depending on the availability of funds.

Valdez also tried to make the coming assault a joint effort between the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Philippine Airlines Mountaineering Club (PALMC). Oracion and Emata are PCG members.


The Mo Everest Expedition Team

ONCE THERE WAS A TEAM. At the launch of the first Mt. Everest Philippine Expedition Team on March 23, 2004, the members were a solid group bonded by a passion to make it to the top of the world's highest peak—together.

ROGER MARGALLO

Training grudges

But the idea caused some conflict in the PALMC when it was pointed out that only PALMC members could join any climb sanctioned by the club.

Still another factor that contributed to the split was the "grudges (*tampuhan*)" during the team's recent training climbs.

Team members have scaled Muztagh-Ata at the China-Pakistan border, Mt. Denali in North America and Mt. Cho-Oyu in the Himalayas in preparation for their Everest climb this year.

"There were no post-climb meetings ... So the ill feeling built up. It's important to assess your climb afterwards and talk about any bad feelings," one member privy to the conflicted Everest team told the INQUIRER.

Choy Aquino said he was "sad and frustrated."

"That's three years of our lives. We worked so hard. But that's expected in a team where you were not friends to begin with. It's a big team because it's an expedition. But the conflict could have been avoided, controlled and minimized," Aquino said.

IN THE KNOW

How much each candidate can spend

THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSES spending limits to ensure equal campaign opportunities among candidates.

The Act Providing for Synchronized National and Local Elections and for Electoral Reforms, or Republic Act No. 7166, sets the spending limit of a candidate at P3 for each registered voter in the constituency where he or she filed their certificate of candidacy.

Political parties and independent candidates can spend P5 for every voter.

As of February 2007, there were 43,817,985 registered voters in the country. Someone running for senator (who is affiliated with a political party) can therefore spend as much as P131.45 million for his or her campaign.

An independent senatorial candidate can shell out as much as P219.09 million.

The Fair Elections Act, or Republic Act No. 9006, also sets guidelines for the candidates' use of the broadcast and print media in their campaign.

TV, radio

Each candidate for a national elective office or political party is entitled to not more than 120 minutes of television ad time and 180 minutes of radio ads.

A candidate or political party for a local elective office is allowed to have not more than 60 minutes of TV ads and 90 minutes of radio ads.

If an ad is given free of charge by the radio or TV station, it should be accompanied by the words "Airtime for this broadcast was provided free of charge by" followed by the name and address of the broadcast company.

Depending on the station and the time it comes out, a 30-second political ad on TV could cost between P30,000 and P250,000.

The price of a 30-second political radio plug costs about P10,000 to P20,000.

Newspaper ads

As for a campaign using the print medium, ads shall not exceed one-fourth page in a broadsheet and one-half page in a tabloid thrice a week per newspaper, magazine or other publications during the campaign period.

The price of a half-page advertisement in tabloids and broadsheet ranges from P50,000 to more than P100,000.

The act also imposes rules covering the rates media outlets may charge.

During the election period, media companies are to charge political parties and candidates a discounted rate of 30, 20 and 10 percent for television, radio and print, respectively, over the average rates charged during the first three quarters of the calendar year preceding the elections. *Cyril Bonabente and Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research*

Mr. Big Spender: I'm like 'a pechay in full bloom'

From page A1

well spent.

"I would not have decided to run if I did not believe I can win and I intend to win," said senatorial candidate Prospero Pichay, who likened his campaign to "a pechay [Chinese lettuce] farm in full bloom."

Low awareness

Nielsen Media Research Philippines (NMRP) found that Pichay spent P33.4 million in the first two weeks of the 13-week campaign on TV ads, the biggest by any senatorial candidate during the period.

Reelectionist Senators Manuel Villar and Ralph Recto spent P30.29 million and P22.79 million, respectively, according to Nielsen.

Pichay, a last-term congressman of Surigao del Sur, said he needed to spend heavily on media ads because of his low awareness level among voters.

"I did not plan to run for the Senate previously, so I never had a media plan. That's why my awareness is very low. I have to catch up with them and I have to do it in the first three or four weeks after which the playing field will be level among us," he said.

TV ad spending to continue

Pichay said his TV ad spending would continue at the same pace, depending on the amount of donations he gets.

But he said his spending would be within the P130-million limit imposed by the Commission on Elections. *(See In the Know above.)*

Pichay said he chose to concentrate his campaign to TV because it has the widest reach among various media platforms.

He shot down criticisms that his heavy spending meant he would have to return the favor to his benefactors should he win a seat in the Senate.

Donations

"These are donations from those I helped in the past so there is nothing to pay for. Since these are donations and not from my (pocket), I don't have to recover them," said Pichay.

He expressed confidence that his heavy ad spending would generate more campaign contributions because the donors are assured that their donations are being used for what they were intended.

Pichay said he could not yet show any hard data to prove if his expenses had yielded the desired results.

"But I guess I can feel it. I could feel it in our rallies in Pangasinan, Davao, Baguio and Pampanga. There are a lot of people who recognize me on the streets," said Pichay, who was wearing a white polo shirt with red, yellow and blue stripes on the shoulders.

Pichay said he was more confident now of winning than when he started the campaign.

"I think we have gathered momentum," said Pichay, who claimed to be the boss of his own campaign strategy with some help from his campaign manager, Sammy Señoren, a former business editor and executive of the INQUIRER.

Too early

Recto said he was unlikely to sustain the P11 million a week he had spent in the first two weeks of the campaign.

"It's still too early to say if the ads are delivering the results. We'll have to wait for the surveys," said Recto.

But he said that his staff claimed that he spent far less than the P22.79 million cited by Nielsen.

Under Comelec rules, a senatorial candidate and a political party are each allowed a total of 120 minutes of TV ads.

Miguel Zubiri, an administration senatorial candidate, said his party would ask the Comelec to clarify how the 120 minutes in extra TV time allotted to each political party (on top of the 120 minutes allotted to each candidate) would be distributed among its members running for the Senate.

"We still don't know if the 120 minutes is fixed for all the members to share. Is it 120 minutes for each party member that members can swap with each other or with other parties? We need to know this," Zubiri told reporters yesterday.

The outgoing Bukidnon representative rounded out the Top 10 big TV ad spenders in the first two weeks of the campaign with a P10-million airtime bill.

Zubiri said the Comelec should clarify this soon or this could lead to unwanted rivalry among members of the administration coalition and the party.

If there was no cap on TV airtime, senatorial candidates could use their entire P130 million spending limit for TV ads, he said.

Recto: Ladlad belongs in Congress, not in closet

By Christian V. Esguerra and Jerome Aning

AN ORGANIZATION OF LESBIANS, GAYS, BIsexuals and "transgenders" disqualified by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) from running as a party-list group yesterday found allies in administration Sen. Ralph Recto and a leftist group.

Recto, who is seeking reelection under Team Unity, said Ang Ladlad headed by Prof. Danton Remoto clearly satisfied the Comelec requirement that a party-list group must represent a marginalized sector, "the litmus test in party-list accreditation."

The Comelec disqualified Ladlad for failing to prove that it had a nationwide membership, a key requirement in the party-list election.

The senator said the group should not be kept out of the "marketplace of ideas and legislation" and instead be allowed to contribute to the "diversity" in Congress.

"The place of Ang Ladlad is in Congress, not in the closet," he said in a statement.

For its part, the labor group Partido ng Manggagawa, which occupies one seat in the House of Representatives, said Ladlad was more deserving of accreditation than other "fake" party-list groups and called on Comelec to purge the current roster of party-list groups participating in the elections.

"It may be true that Ladlad does not have a nationwide membership but other fake party-list groups do not represent the marginalized and should have been disqualified even earlier," said PM vice chair Gerry Rivera.

The group said that the Supreme Court, in landmark decision on the party-list system after the 2001 elections, asserted that both the party-list group and its nominees must be representative of the marginalized.

On the basis of that jurisprudence, it said, the Comelec disqualified many organizations including the group Mamamayan Laban sa Droga that then led the 2001 party-list elections.

PM claimed organizations such as KAKUSA (Kapatiran ng mga Nakulong na Walang Sala) and AVE (Alliance of Volunteer Educators) were dubious organizations and yet were accredited by Comelec.

Rivera claimed that the two groups were "vehicles for traditional politicians to gain a seat in Congress via a cheaper campaign," and worse, were "family enterprises."

"Ladlad can legitimately claim to represent the marginalized gay community but what underrepresented constituencies do KAKUSA and AVE stand for?" he asked.

He said that the three nominees of AVE were its incumbent representative, Eulogio Magsaysay, followed by his wife and then his mother. KAKUSA meanwhile was bankrolled by the clans of jailed politicians like Romeo Jalosjos and Ruben Ecleo, "and thus the nominees will also come from them," Rivera said.

"After the experience of three party-list elections, traditional politicians found out that it's cheaper to win seats in Congress through the party-list instead of through representation of the district because instead of spending P50 million or more depending on the district, they find it more cost-effective to win in the party-list for only P15 to 20 million," he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, March 2, 2007
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Ez 18:21-28
Gospel: Matthew 5:20-26

Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you, then, that if you are not righteous in a much broader way than the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to our people in the past: Do not commit murder; anyone who does kill will have to face trial. But now I tell you: whoever gets angry with a brother or sister will have to face trial. Whoever insults a brother or sister deserves to be brought before the council; whoever calls a brother or a sister 'Fool' deserves to be thrown into the fire of hell. So, if you are about to offer your gift at the altar and you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with him, and then come back and offer your gift to God.

"Don't forget this: be reconciled with your opponent quickly when you are together on the way to court. Otherwise he will turn you over to the judge, who will hand you over to the police, who will put you in jail. There you will stay, until you have paid the last penny."

Commentary

This first week of Lent keeps returning to our relationships with others, to our own need to ask forgiveness. But our equally important, if not greater need, is to ask forgiveness from each other and to give forgiveness to others, even if unbidden—as we have known it from God. We must stop our wickedness, beginning with an examination of our conscience, informed by the Scripture. With others, let all of us turn together to live in virtue.

And Jesus is as blunt as Ezekiel telling us that our holiness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees who are intent on practicing specifics of traditions rather than the spirit of the law especially as it impacts our neighbor and our poor and our enemy. Of course, murder is wrong and we must stop killing one another (under all circumstances), but more than that, we must stop letting anger control us, and rage and hate, and lies that lead to murder not only in our hearts but in reality as well. We must not come to pray without asking for and giving forgiveness, and releasing the grip of abuse and violence within us.

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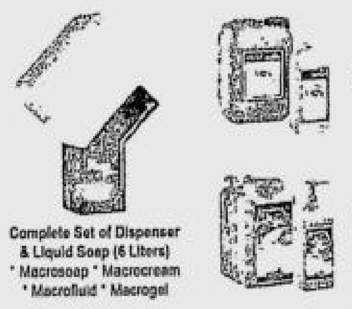
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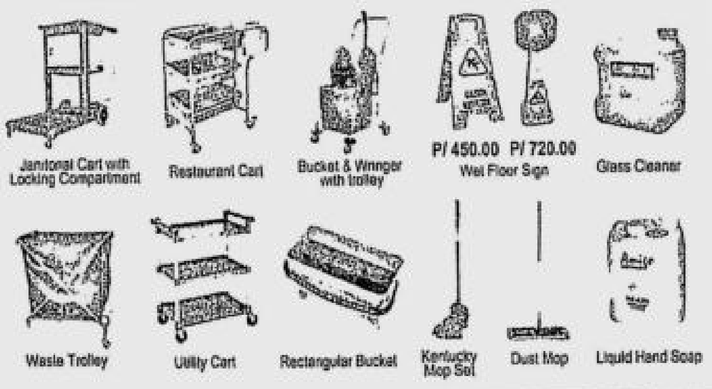

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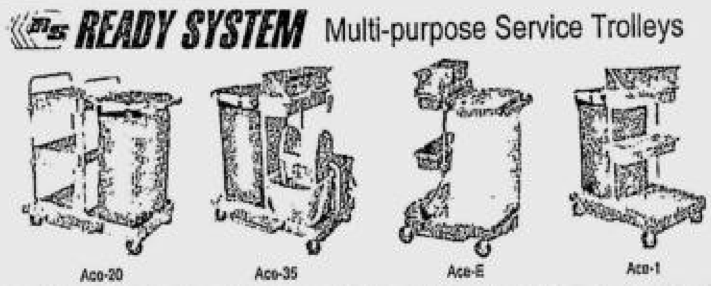

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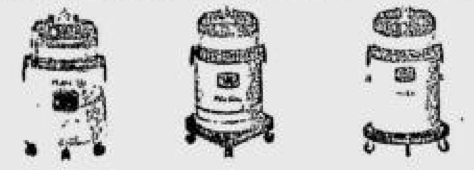
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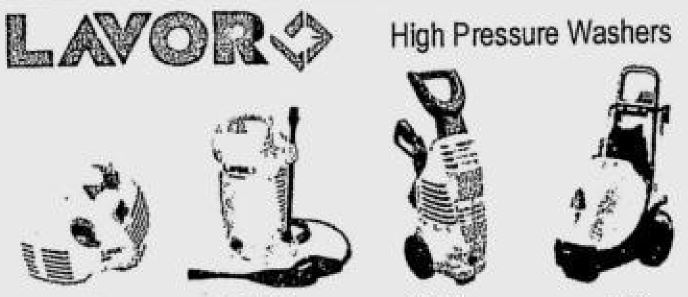

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McDonald's Proudly Showcases Food Quality Through Its Open Doors Program

Sharon Cuneta, the McDonald's Mom

Doting moms Jackielou Blanco, Cheska Diaz, and Maritoni Fernandez take a look around McDonald's kitchen.

HOW DOES YOUR CHILD'S FAVORITE CHICKEN McDo come out oh-so-juicy and crispy? What potatoes are used in making your favorite McDonald's French Fries? How long does it take to cook a yummy McDonald's Cheeseburger? What nutrients are in every McDonald's salad?

The force behind McDonald's Open Doors Program: VP for Restaurant Operations Group Melon Salazar, VP for Marketing Margot Torres, Product Manager Barbie Ocampo, Training Dept. Head Jerry Rosito with Ronald McDonald.

In its thrust to promote the brand's promise of food safety and quality and embarking upon a course of unprecedented openness, McDonald's boldly goes where no local fast-food chain has gone before – to open its kitchens to the public with its Open Doors Program in a brave move to communicate to all – especially to moms – that each McDonald's meal is thoughtfully made, using only the freshest ingredients, under the best and most caring conditions.

Many concerned moms participated in the kitchen tours that highlighted the main preparation areas – the Fries, Chicken, Burger, and Salad stations. Each tour lasted an hour, divided into pre-tour, tour, and post-tour segments.

Some celebrity moms could not resist the urge to sneak a peek in Ronald's kitchen, including celebrated actresses Jackielou Blanco, Maritoni Fernandez, Yayo Aguila and Cheska Diaz, as well as fashion retailer Ruby Gan, television host Chiqui Roa-Puno, and sportscaster/host Shaan Bermudez-Hizon. They all discovered how each McDonald's kitchen is kept under lock by the four key words Quality, Service, Cleanliness and Value (QSC&V). QSC&V is what brings consistency in all McDonald's products, and it is this consistency that has made McDonald's one of the most loved and trusted brands in the world. Effectively promoting McDonald's promise of food safety and quality, the simultaneous tours also demonstrated the brand's care for all families' well-being by way of careful food preparation. By strengthening ties with the family, McDonald's Open Doors Program reflects the brand's role as parenting partner and ally in providing products that even the most discerning consumers can trust within an atmosphere of security.

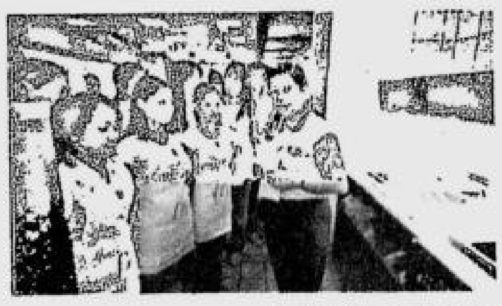
> *‘When it comes to quality, we at McDonald's never leave anything to chance,” says McDonald's President Kenneth Yang. ‘We make sure to give them the proper training and we check every single step from the market to the store.”*

"This is when QSC&V really matters. It helps us bring order in what we do and consistency in all our products. When it comes to quality, we at McDonald's never leave anything to chance," says McDonald's President Kenneth Yang. "We make sure to give them the proper training and we check every single step from the market to the store," he proudly added.

McDonald's VP for Marketing Margot Torres adds, "Opening our kitchens reinforces our openness and transparency. Moms can feel at ease knowing that they are giving their children and the rest of their family only the freshest and best quality meals."

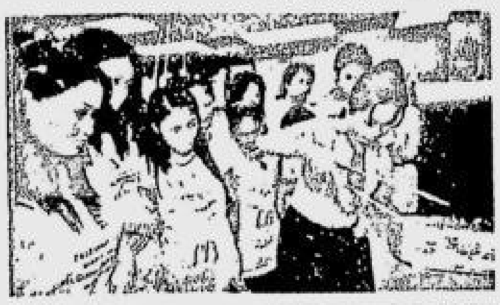
Last February 25, 14 stores nationwide participated in the program, namely: McDonald's Laoag, Lepanto, Quezon Avenue, EDSA IT, Governor Forbes, Las Piñas, Sucat Palanyag, Osmeña Cebu, Cebu North Road, Binondo, Bacolod Lacson, CSI Lucao Pangasinan, Olongapo-Gapan Road, and SM Sta. Rosa.

This program was first implemented in McDonald's China and Australia, where it was likewise well-received.



A short briefing by the Operations Consultant on what the excited participants can expect during the tour.

McDonald's Restaurant Manager demonstrates the right way of washing the hands with running water and sanitizing with specially formulated microbial soap.



All in full attention as they see how the crunchy and tasty Chicken McDo is prepared.

Unveiling the secrets of how the world's famous Fries are prepared.

Participants attentively listen as the Restaurant Manager shares the McDonald's rule: "If it's not right, don't serve it."

McDonald's President Kenneth Yang

All smiles after the tour: Yayo Aguila, Jackielou Blanco, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Maritoni Fernandez and Cindy Yang with Ronald McDonald.

Chiqui Roa-Puno, Shaan Bermudez-Hizon, and Yayo Aguila listen to how the McDonald's Super Salad is prepared.

VP for ROG Melon Salazar, Ronald McDonald, Cheska Diaz, Maritoni Fernandez, and Jackielou Blanco

Shaan Bermudez-Hizon, Chiqui Roa-Puno, and Yayo Aguila carefully participate in the tour.

ADVT

'WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?'

When? Farmers press DAR chief

THE LAWYER OF FARMER-BENEFICIARIES on hunger strike outside the Department of Agrarian Reform yesterday dared Secretary Nasser Pangandaman to set the date for their installation inside a sugarcane plantation in Negros Occidental to show he was serious about it.

"What else are we waiting for? Another compromise?" Christian Monsod, lawyer for the farmers' umbrella organization Task Force Mapalad (TFM), said in a phone interview. "We want a date, full installation and protection for them."

He said the 122 farmers had followed all the judicial processes required to occupy and till their 144-hectare landholding inside Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town for several years, but were still being given the run-around.

"They've waited long enough... DAR has an obligation to install them. We've given them all kinds of opportunities," he said.

Pangandaman announced Wednesday the department would bring the farmer-beneficiaries to their land next week, a day after 16 of the 22 beneficiaries on hunger strike were rushed to the hospital after losing consciousness and feeling dizzy.

Yesterday, the secretary said he would keep his word and install the farmers next week, but couldn't give a date yet because he was still finalizing a plan with the police and military to ensure their safety during and after installation.

"There's going to be an arrangement to ensure their safety. It's not that easy to install them. We can't rush this thing," he said in a phone interview. "If we can ensure their safety, we can install them tomorrow."

Monsod and TFM representatives were set to meet with DAR officials yesterday afternoon to discuss the installation. As this developed, two weakened protesters were rushed to the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment. Those earlier hospitalized had returned to their camp.

The protesting beneficiaries and even Monsod had greeted Pangandaman's announcement with skepticism, claiming he had reneged on his promises to install them a number of times.

"We will never believe him until he goes down there and install the beneficiaries," a weak Adelaida Santillan, 57, clutching a bottle of mineral water on a folding bed under a tent outside DAR's gate, said in an interview.

Monsod agreed: "We will be very happy if he complies with it. If that happens, fine. We'd like to see it in black and white."

The farmer-beneficiaries started camping Feb. 20 outside the DAR office in Quezon City, and went on hunger strike the next day in protest of Pangandaman's failure to install them in their land Feb. 6.

The DAR granted the 122 farmers a collective certificate of land ownership award (CLOA) in 2002 to the 144-hectare property in the plantation under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Landowner Roberto Cuenca filed cases questioning this.

In 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that all controversies pertaining to land reform fall under DAR's jurisdiction.

Leviste malingering to stay out of jail, says Gonzalez

By Leila B. Salaverria

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ BElieves former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste, who is in jail after being charged with murder for the death of his long-time aide Rafael de las Alas, is just faking his illness.

Leviste has been confined at the Makati Medical Center since last week and was admitted for hypovolemic shock secondary to acute gastrointestinal bleeding, according to a medical bulletin issued by his physician. He was reported to be in stable but guarded condition.

"I think he is malingering so he will be out of the prison cell," Gonzalez told reporters. "It has been almost a habit. Almost every weekend he's in the hospital."

But he also said it was up to the courts whether or not to sanction Leviste's guards at the Makati City Jail for bringing the suspect to a hospital without a court order.

He added that a court order is not always necessary to bring an inmate to a medical facility. He said there have been several instances when inmates in Muntinlupa were taken to hospitals even without an order from the court.

"To me it's not mandatory to get a court order," he said. "You don't want a prisoner or patient to lose his life under your watch."

Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, who is handling the case against Leviste, earlier said he did not believe the suspect was sick and decried what he said was the special treatment being given to the former governor.

"That is mere drama to portray him as the underdog. He wants to escape culpability. He just wants to enjoy the comfort of a warm bed," Velasco said.

He said he wants Leviste examined by government doctors to determine the latter's true condition.

The prosecutor earlier recommended the upgrading of Leviste's homicide charge to murder, saying there was "treachery, evident premeditation and cruelty" in De las Alas' death.

Man with P4M in suitcase held

By Tarra Quismundo

POLICE AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS YESTERday arrested a man trying to spirit roughly P4 million out of the country in his suitcase at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Nabbed at the first X-ray check at the Centennial Terminal was Telesforo Danilo Isidro Jr., 52, of Balanga, Bataan.

"When he passed through the first screening checkpoint, they (baggage inspectors) saw the cash and when it [suitcase] was opened, they found out it contained Philippine money. Automatically, as per procedure, (the police) turned him over to customs," said airport security chief, retired Gen. Angel Atutubo.

"He wanted to deceive our X-ray operators... he thought his money would not be detected," said Senior Supt. Efren Labiang, chief of the 1st Police Center for Aviation Security.

Isidro thus missed his Singapore-bound Philippine Airlines flight which took off at 7:30 a.m.

Isidro refused to speak to the media at the Bureau of Customs' In-Bond Section at the terminal where he was brought.

Atutubo said Isidro told customs officials the money was not his but that he was only asked to carry it as a favor.

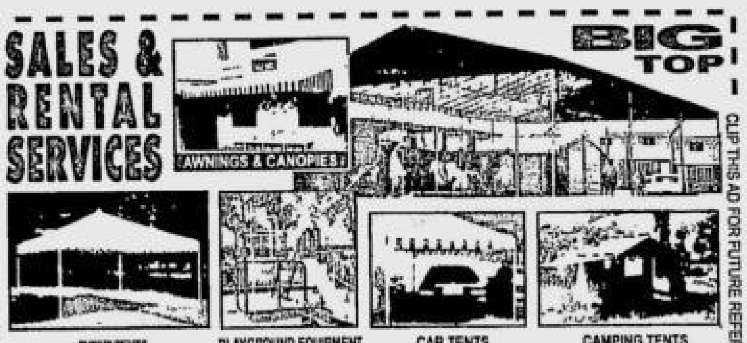
Money laundering

"The interrogation is ongoing. This man is a real estate contractor and a Sorsogon native who lives in Balanga. But according to his statement, he was just asked to carry the cash, that medical bills had to be settled by the owner, one Lee KY," Atutubo told reporters.

"We are still verifying their connection. We have reported the incident to the AMLC (Anti-Money Laundering Council)," he said.

A check of departure records showed Isidro had left the country at least six times since January. The files of his destinations each time could not be retrieved, however.

As of press time, customs examiners were still counting the cash, which were in bundles of P500 and P1,000 bills that had been placed in two black bags in his suitcase that also contained personal items.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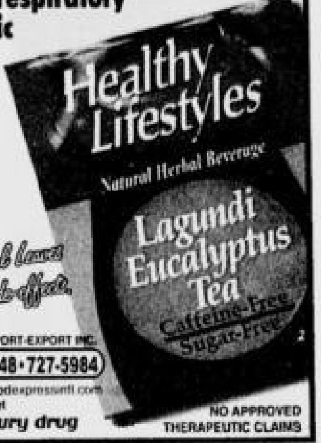
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First Boor

EDITORIAL

UNBECOMING OF A GENTLEMAN BEST DESCRIBES the behavior last Monday of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo when he challenged to a fight a defense lawyer who was cross-examining him during the trial of one of the several libel cases he has filed against the media. The conduct shows arrogance and a searing contempt for judicial processes. The fact that Arroyo is a lawyer himself may indicate a certain scorn for the ideals he has sworn to uphold as a member of the bar. Does the same scorn characterize his merry litigation against the media and his penchant for filing libel cases against members of the press who cast a critical eye on his conduct as a public figure?

The First Gentleman had the good grace to apologize to the judge for the unseemly conduct later, and he should be credited for that. But his outburst had given the public a glimpse of his personality: Here's one person who would erupt first, and say sorry later. Here's one man who's quick to anger, and slow to appeasement. Here's one person who does not mind at all being a public figure, but who can't stand the glare of the public eye, much less questions about his conduct as a public figure.

The First Gentleman, of course, insists that he's a private person, that he's not a public official. But he himself has not denied the honorific given him as a result of being spouse to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Of course, what may be immediately apparent with the First Gentleman's court conduct is that it seems apposite to his spouse's outbursts, her propensity to bang the phone at the slightest hint of bad news and to walk out of press conferences when she does not like the questions being thrown at her. If only for their vile temper, the two are really compatible. They deserve each other.

The two likewise seem to share a contempt for the press. Cast under the merciless glare of the public eye, President Macapagal-Arroyo smarts and hurts. She has been made to account for questions about the legitimacy of her presidency—questions that have arisen not because of the media's doing. She has also been taken to task for her rather slow response to the killings of political dissidents and activists, and seems to share the arrogance of her own officials, such as Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, in heaping scorn on the inquiry conducted by the United Nations rapporteur on human rights, Philip Alston, an inquiry which her own government had asked for. And even on her favorite topic of economics, where she supposedly excels and for which she is quick to trumpet the achievements of her management team, she seems to be always on the defensive.

The thing is, the President could answer all of these questions with grace and intelligence, but she always chooses to question the motivations of those posing them, always espying dark shadows behind the queries, and always demanding that the questions be made along her own line of inquiry, which is predictably favorable to her government. She does not only want to be President, she also wants to be stage manager.

Ms Arroyo is accused of having stage-managed the 2004 elections, but Chair Benjamin Abalos of the Commission on Elections does not only insist on denying it, he does not want any questions, either, about the way the Comelec seems to have done its job poorly in safeguarding the sanctity of the ballot. Of course, Abalos could deny the charge, but he cannot refuse to answer queries about them, even those posed by Kontra Daya, an organization against election fraud. Abalos was reportedly irked by the Kontra Daya campaign, but he should look beyond himself. To be sure, Kontra Daya is a citizens' campaign for authentic elections, which the Comelec is duty-bound to ensure.

So are official outbursts a platform and policy of the government? We don't know. What we have observed is that the legendary presidential temper seems to operate by osmosis—from the President's spouse and kin to the President's fellow workers in government. What we're seeing is a new public administration system: a management by flare-ups, a presidency by eruption.

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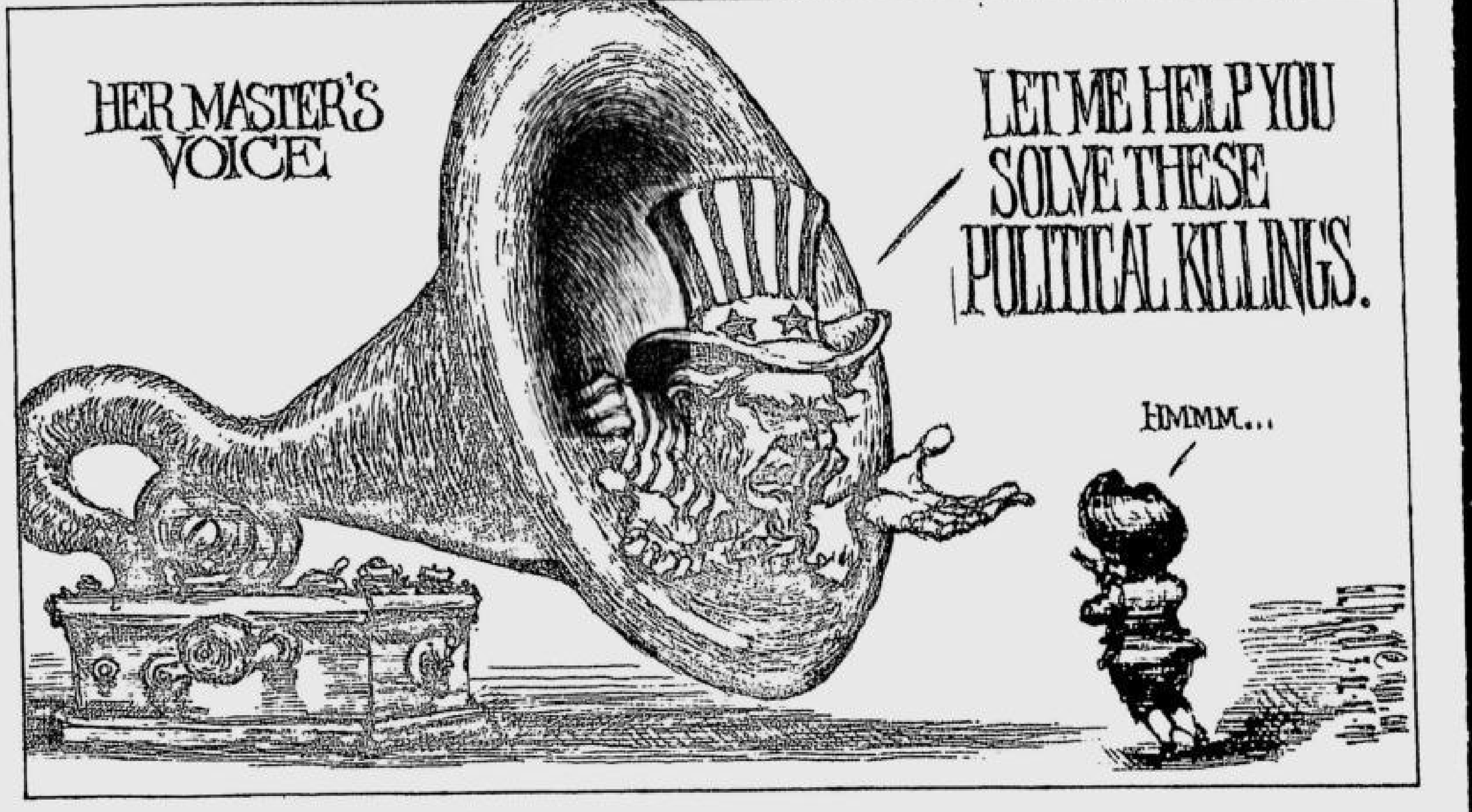

HER MASTER'S VOICE
LET ME HELP YOU SOLVE THESE POLITICAL KILLINGS.
HMMM...

Manila illegally collecting business taxes

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

DO YOU KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF the City of Manila has been illegally collecting taxes since the year 2000? Sen. Alfredo Lim told the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday that the illegal taxes already collected must now be between P2 billion and P3 billion. And since they were illegally collected, they should be refunded to the taxpayers.

These taxes were declared null and void with finality by the Supreme Court way back on June 27, 2006, but the decision was not made public until recently, and so the City of Manila continued to collect the taxes declared illegal by the court.

Actually, the ordinance imposing the taxes was declared null and void three times: by the Department of Justice on Aug. 17, 2000; by the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF) in November of the same year; and finally by the Supreme Court in June of 2006.

Despite this, however, the city government, through its treasurer, Liberty Toledo and licensing division chief, Joseph Santiago, continued collecting taxes based on a void ordinance, thus opening themselves to administrative liability for violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

How can this happen in a modern city like Manila? This is how:

The City Council passed Tax Ordinance 7988, otherwise known as the Revised Revenue Code of the City of Manila, repealing Tax Ordinance 7794. TO 7988 amended certain sections of TO 7794 by increasing the tax rates applicable to certain establishments operating within the territorial jurisdiction of the city. It was approved by the mayor on Feb. 25, 2000.

Section 21 of TO 7794 was reproduced verbatim as Section 21 under the new ordinance, except for the last paragraph which reads: "PROVIDED, that all registered businesses in the City of Manila that are already paying the aforementioned tax shall be exempted from payment thereof." That deletion, in effect, imposed an additional business tax on businesses that are already subject to tax under the other sections, specifically Section 14 of the New Revenue Code of the City of Manila. Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. sued, claiming that the imposition exceeds the limitation on the taxing power of the city under Section 14 (h) of the LGC of 1991. That deletion is a violation of the Local Government Code of 1991, and the clear mandate of Article X, Section 6 of the 1987 Constitution, "hence Section 21 is illegal and unconstitutional."

On Aug. 17, 2000, Justice Secretary Artemio Tuquero declared TO 7988 null and void and without legal effect, because of the failure of those implementing it to have the ordinance published for three consecutive days in a newspaper of general circulation as mandated by the LGC of 1991. Tuquero's resolution lapsed into finality when the city did not file a motion for reconsideration or an appeal.

On Nov. 16, 2000, Singer Sewing Machine asked the BLGF if Manila has the right to enforce the questioned ordinance despite the DOJ resolution. The BLGF, in response, ordered the city treasurer on Nov. 20, 2000 to "cease and desist" from enforcing the ordinance, inviting special attention to section 190 of the LGC, which states that the enforcement of any revenue measure after due notice of its disapproval or suspension shall be sufficient ground for disciplinary actions against the responsible local officials and employees.

The city government defied all these and continued assessing Coca-Cola the tax rates prescribed under the nullified tax ordinance. It petitioned the regional trial court to enjoin the city government from implementing said ordinance. The RTC, in its Nov. 28, 2001 decision, reiterated the findings of the DOJ.

While the case was pending, the city council passed another tax ordinance, No. 8011, to amend the questioned TO 7988. This was again challenged by Coca-Cola before the DOJ on the grounds that: (1) the tax ordinance amends another that had been previously declared null and void by the DOJ; and (2) the ordinance was not published upon its approval in accordance with the LGC of 1991.

On July 5, 2001, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez declared TO 8011 "null and void and legally not existing."

The city government appealed to the RTC and then to the Supreme Court. Both appeals were dismissed.

Meanwhile, on the basis of the enactment of TO 8011, the city government filed a motion for reconsideration with the RTC of its Nov. 28, 2001 decision, which the court granted on May 8, 2002. It said:

"Considering that Ordinance No. 7988 has already been amended by Ordinance No. 8011 entitled 'An Ordinance Amending Certain Sections of Ordinance No. 7988' approved by the City Mayor of Manila on Feb. 22, 2001, let the above-entitled case be as it is hereby dismissed." Coca-Cola appealed to the Supreme Court.

The tribunal reversed the decision of the RTC dismissing the Coca-Cola case saying, "there is no basis in law for such dismissal. The amending law, having been declared null and void, in legal contemplation, therefore, does not exist. Furthermore, even if Tax Ordinance 8011 was not declared null and void, the trial court should not have dismissed the case on the reason that said tax ordinance had already amended Tax Ordinance 7988. As held by this Court in the case of People v. Lim, if an order or law sought to be amended is invalid, then it does not legally exist, there should be no occasion or need to amend it."

The City of Manila, therefore, should not be collecting the higher taxes. On the contrary, it should refund to the taxpayers the taxes it illegally collected since February 2000. But wonder of wonders, it is still collecting, illegally, these taxes until now.

What the reports really say about us

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

BOTH THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL rapporteur and the government-appointed Melo Commission have spoken. They confirm the tragedy of rampant extrajudicial killings of activists and truth-seekers in our country. But Malacañang's reaction and the Filipino public's lack of indignation tell even more troubling truths about ourselves and the President we have supposedly elected.

First, Malacañang and its military chiefs continue to disavow any complicity whatsoever. When they persist in blaming the killings mainly on Left-wing purges, they merely confirm for us the "state of almost total denial" that the UN's Prof. Philip Alston has lamented.

Second, Malacañang has revived obsolete rhetoric against international human rights fact-finding missions, and summons the cause of national honor to hide our national disgrace. These arguments did not work under Marcos, and failed to insulate him from global inquiries. Do they think it would work any better for Ms Arroyo? Indeed, international law has since been reformed even more precisely to allow these "outsiders" to come in. The "nationalist" defense is thus wholly discredited. It wrongly equates the government with its people, and tragically gives domestic elites a free hand to immiserize their own. By embracing Marcos-era rhetoric, the Palace places Ms Arroyo on the wrong side of history, and all for naught.

Third, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon have directed rather personal barbs against the UN special rapporteur. They seem totally unaware of Alston's stature in international human rights circles, both academic and professional. Between Gonzalez and Alston, who do you think people will believe? But if nothing Gonzalez says can chisel away the man's standing in his field, why bristle with contempt, loudly and in public?

The real problem, then, is not that they are utterly clueless, but that they are deliberately oblivious. Those comments were mainly for domestic consumption, the sort that will play well to the "hooting throng." Who cares what the world says, so long as we retain our turf? It affirms the old adage that all foreign policy is an extension of domestic politics, but more than that, it confirms that our domestic politics is of an extremely populist, non-normative sort.

Finally, most worrisome of all, given the sustained intensity of the killings, where are the street protests, the outraged multitude, the raging partisans? This was exactly our circumstance during the waning years of Marcos, a people who had lost their capacity for moral indignation. The one difference is that now we have articulate and assertive civil society and party-list groups, but they merely lull us into complacency that our democracy is alive.

All debate on public issues is limited to what elsewhere they call "the political classes," whether of the Left, the Center, or the Right. The rest of the populace is either too comfortable or too afflicted: too affluent to be bothered by the deaths of those marginalized, faceless "others," or too poor to care for anything beyond urgent, day-to-day needs.

For as long as the killings are narrowly targeted, confined to partisans in political strife and their underlings, and leave the rest of the non-political classes unscathed, their evil perpetrators can count on an apathetic, laid-back public. And that apathy is as much the democratic will of the Filipino people, memories of Edsa notwithstanding.

The real danger, then, is that Malacañang is playing a far more insidiously sophisticated game. Why bludgeon a whole nation, why anger more people than is necessary, when surgical strikes against provincial-level leaders will do the trick? Operationally, they should cripple the enemy. Politically, it is distant enough from the urban middle class, but sufficiently ominous to portend what anti-terrorists call "a heavy tap on the shoulder." In the long term, it will push underground the parliamentary Left, and then it's open season for its members, either as combatants in the battlefield or as criminals under the penal code.

Therein lies the Palace's true apprehension about Alston's report. It has "mainstreamed" the debate on extrajudicial killings; no longer can the killings be dismissed as the wild rantings of a rabid Left. It has also placed the debate on proper normative footing, and begins with the sanctity of human rights. Before, when the debate was at a purely polemical level, the public seemed largely convinced that all leftists were fair game because they had voluntarily chosen a life of living dangerously.

In a functioning constitutional democracy, those who betray the constitution are booted out, and thrice-a-week killings of activists can bring a government down. The last time we faced such genuine outrage, unmediated by political elites, was with the groundswell of fury over Flor Contemplacion's execution in Singapore.

Today public rallies are suspect; they are crowds-for-rent for the politicians, party-mobilized masses in Left-wing protests, or simply street parties parading as political rallies. Only the evangelical preachers are able to muster authentic crowds, and how!

The killings have failed to move us. Our government wouldn't listen to the few who dared to speak, and indeed countenanced the deaths of 820 who did. That we awaited with bated breath the statement of the UN special rapporteur means either that we, the citizens, have failed to make our democracy work, or we are seeking new ways to make our voices heard.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

GMA's dilemma

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION HAS PLAYED coy to the offer of US Ambassador Kristie Kenney to help the government investigate the extrajudicial killings in the country. The government was not eager to grab the offer.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita gingerly touched it as if it were a live bomb. "At the proper time you know when such assistance will be sought by the Philippine government and what assistance may be asked," he said.

Kenney made the US intentions clear when she said on Monday that "every effort" should be made to "investigate, prosecute those responsible, and exonerate the innocent." These remarks were anathema to the Arroyo administration which until now has not acknowledged that a wave of killings of epidemic proportions has been taking place since 2001.

Although Kenney recognized that the government had come up with "quite a serious action plan," she did not think it was serious enough and doing enough. She said: "The key now is to follow up, to investigate, to fortify the institutions that investigate, to hold people responsible."

As if the ambassador's message was not clear enough, the US Embassy spokesperson said they have followed the killings "with some concern." He said that while the Arroyo administration was addressing the issue, "certainly, more can be done." The killings that remained unresolved were "not good in a democracy," the spokesperson said. "The crux of the matter is the need to recognize that murder is murder, no matter who gets murdered or who is doing it."

The trepidation with which the administration responded to the US offer of assistance appears as a traumatic reaction to having its fingers burned after Philip Alston, the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights, scored the government and the Philippine military for their failure to "respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings which have been convincingly attributed" to the Armed Forces. Alston issued the scathing report at the end of a 10-day mission to investigate the killings upon the invitation of the Philippine government.

The US Embassy intervention adds to the international pressure on President Macapagal-Arroyo to make her government and the military accountable for the killing of leftist activists and journalists and is regarded by the administration as an unwelcome intrusion. It's possible the administration regretted inviting the UN to assist it in the investigation of the killings.

Both the US Embassy and the UN are virtually pressing the government to put the military on the carpet and to produce results of prosecution. Both are concentrating on holding the military and police accountable for the killings in the wake of the release of the Melo Commission report which found that "there is some circumstantial evidence to support the proposition that some elements within or with connection to the military are responsible for the killings."

The international interventions have put the President in the unenviable position of being pushed to a collision with the military and the police. The military has been protective of its officers, among them retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who has been accused by human rights groups as the driving force behind the killings. During the hearings conducted by the Melo Commission, it was pointed out that the killings of activists increased in the areas where Palparan had been assigned, earning for him the label of "butcher." Testifying at the hearings, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said the AFP had conducted an "internal" investigation on the responsibility of military personnel but admitted "no formal investigation was conducted since no formal complaints were filed against General Palparan." Police officials excused the Philippine National Police of responsibility, saying it could not file a case because it had no jurisdiction over Palparan since he had retired from the military service, and besides no criminal complaint had been laid against him.

This is the kind of protective shield the military has erected around its personnel, and this is the reason the UN and the US Embassy are pressing the government to prosecute the killers. The Alston report said "the AFP remains in a state of almost total denial" of its accountability for the killings.

The President faces risks if she presses the military to prosecute its own personnel for human rights atrocities and not to condone these abuses. Such a crackdown could erode her support in the AFP, which has a history of launching coups and mutinies since 1986, at a time when her government is unpopular and unstable. The President barely survived two impeachment complaints in Congress and street protests demanding her resignation. She cannot push the military too hard without provoking a mutiny. The military is the main pillar of support of her weak government. Its loyalty is divided. A crackdown on the military could widen this division. In a showdown provoked by a political crisis, to which the regime has been prone, the President is uncertain which way it will go.

The President knows this and the military knows she is vulnerable and depends on it for her regime's survival more than on her political coalition. The President is hostage to this contradiction. But her government critically needs international support as a legitimizing element. And she won't gain this without stopping the killings. This is her dilemma.

Letter to Bo

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WITH YOUR INDULGENCE, ALLOW ME TO print in this space a letter to my brother Ernesto Jr., better known as "Bo," during the family's tribute to him Wednesday evening. His remains were cremated and interred yesterday. Thank you for all your prayers!

Dear Bo,

I can just imagine you standing in the sidelines tonight, and laughing to yourself at our attempts at drama and gravity. For you always had the gift for seeing the funny side of everything, the ironic twists that most other people didn't appreciate—or even get—even as we embarked on our own little family dramas. We could always count on you to say the right thing at the right time—usually something comic—that burst our self-important balloons and brought us back to reality. If Manny had his repertoire of jokes, you had your uniquely warped view of humanity, and the gift for easing tension-filled situations with a well-timed turn of phrase.

Yours was a charmed life. It is said that you were the favorite of Lola Eming because you bore a striking resemblance to Lolo Ambing. As teenagers, while Neneng had to undergo a third degree just to get permission from Mama to attend a party, you devised means to charm Mama when you wanted her consent for something.

You had the knack for making friends. As I told your high school and college friends from the Ateneo, I remember growing up in a home constantly filled with people, most of them your friends and *barkada*. The room you shared with Nono and Manny was always packed with young men and emanated the odor of male sweat, used socks and cigarette smoke. Many an evening I stewed in frustration as we sat before the only TV set in the house and endured hours of televised basketball and football games, while you and your *barkada* loudly cheered and thumped each other on the shoulder with every basket and goal of your teams. I never did get the intricacies of football, but those nights turned me into a Crispa fan.

As an aside, when I grew up and got married, I quickly lost my interest in sports because Pie preferred the more solitary pursuits of swimming and fishing. Early in our marriage, when a magazine featured Atoy Co and Francis Arnaiz on the cover, Pie asked me, "*Sino sila?*" I was shocked and demanded to know: "*Hindi ka ba Pilipino?*" Only then did I discover that not every male Pinoy shared your and your friends' devotion to athletics.

* * *

BUT in fairness, you were not just a couch potato jock. You had your own days of glory in track and field and in college football. I remember Mama bringing me to the championship race of the NCAA 100-meter dash to cheer you on. But when the starting gun went off, I was distracted by something and when I turned to look, you had already broken the tape and Mama was on her feet, screaming. You had won gold—and would win many other medals besides—and I am sorry I missed this particular achievement of yours.

It was only appropriate, given your gift for relating with people, that you should choose human resource development as your own specialty when time came to choose a career. When you became head of HR for Mandarin Hotel, you became a minor celebrity in Alaminos because of the many townsfolk you helped give jobs to. Of course, this was all at the instigation of Mama, who, you complained, not only badgered you into finding a job for yet another jobless town mate, but even asked you to treat her and the applicant to lunch at one of the Mandarin's posh restaurants.

During Papa's wake, one Alaminos resident recounted how your generosity to town mates was matched only by Papa's own willingness to hire young people from Alaminos while he was chief of the ACCFA. "*Agay-latan ya service* (Such outstanding service)!" the town mate exclaimed. And yet, typically, you never sought recognition for what you had done, nor did you exhibit any resentment when our hometown chose to recognize me as an "Outstanding Alaminian" when all I did for the old hometown was to write about it.

* * *

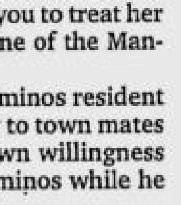
INDEED, through all these years of minor celebrity, I've always felt your support for and your pride in me. You were always quick with sharp observations about my facial expressions or my subliminal messages in my TV appearances. I could never fool you.

You exhibited the same pride in your family, in Coratec and in Coreen, Bengel and Jami. You were not the sort of husband or father to fish out pictures of your family or boast about their achievements. But you always had stories to share about their work, their significant others, and when we were abroad, their *bilins* and needs always came first on your shopping list. Nono once complained that he could never enjoy a meal in peace when he was with you and your kids because he would always end up laughing and nearly choking on his food. That's what I remember most about our gatherings in Alabang—the laughter that broke out frequently over shared meals.

Before your last admittance at Makati Med, you came to our house for lunch and a meeting on our book project. I promised to provide a sugar-free dessert if you made the effort to come, and Tec texted me to say that I should make sure to have the sugar-free dessert ready as you were coming. Aside from tiring in the middle of the meeting and asking to lie down, the rest of that day you were your old self—quick with a quip, ironic in your observations, and kidding everyone around. That is how I would like to remember you: full of fun and friendly banter, and showing, in simple and even silent ways, how much you loved being around us, and how much you loved us all.

I will miss you, we will all miss you. And we will try not to turn this into a big telenovela because we know how much that would amuse you!

Explorations



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

IF READER RESPONSE TO LAST WEEK'S COLumn on my plan to teach an elective course on "Food in Philippine history" is a gauge, I don't think I will want for students. Readers sent e-mail and text messages, with comments ranging from books on food that were not mentioned in the column to treasured family recipes. Others sent in thoughts on what themes or ideas could be pursued as focus for research or reflection. I was just thinking aloud in my column and the syllabus has yet to be compiled and organized, but this early I know that the working bibliography alone, the annotated list of books to be used as reference in the course, is worth three or four columns.

While we have many books that deal with food, these are but explorations. It seems that by defining what makes food distinctly Philippine, we are also defining who we are and what it means to be Filipino.

My mother used to say that she wanted to go around the country in search of *kakanin*, that she wanted to get regional recipes kitchen-tested and standardized so that anyone with her book could get a taste of say Bicol or Tawi-Tawi in his own home, here or abroad. Everyone is trying to get the national without finding the regional first.

The same could be said about textbook history. Students learn about the national before they even know the local. I think that every region should have a published history and every elementary school should teach students about their surroundings, their local history, culture and heroes before they learn anything "national." Giving people roots and sense of place gives them a way of seeing themselves as part of a nation.

An appreciation of regional food alone might answer nagging questions like: Why is food in Bicol hot and spicy? How come Visayans are averse to fish like *kanduli*, *dalag* or *hito*? Why is goat, dog, bat and mole cricket a favorite in one region and poison in another? Why does a region like Pampanga or a city like Iloilo have a reputation for good food? Why do some foods carry disgusting names like: *kulangot* (literally snot, is a small pinched sweet packaged in wooden balls and red tape and found chiefly in the Baguio market), or *taklang pusa* (Kapampangan for cat droppings, is a hollow puffy sweet known elsewhere as *linga*). Is tripe referred to as "*twalya*" simply because its texture resembles that of bath towels? Why are dishes familiar to Filipinos, like *lumpiang Shanghai*, *pancit Canton*, and *chorizo de Bilbao*, not found in their places of origin?

We have the answers at the tip of our tongues, we have the components, but still we have to look elsewhere for really specialized work. There are histories written on salt, sugar, cod and rice, but nothing comes close to that hefty book on the history of the potato that not only traces the story of this common staple but demonstrates how central it is to the evolution of Europe. I chanced upon the potato book while rummaging through the academic bargain bin in Dillon's bookstore in London and I can't remember why I didn't buy it. Was I put off by the price, or stunned by the author's shameless display of erudition? Not having this book is one of the regrets of my life.

With some encouragement, one of my students might produce the definitive history of *bagoong*, *buro*, *or tuyo*.

To make my students read the novels of Rizal more closely, I ask them for all the references to food. There is quite a lot: a grocery list of fish for the famous picnic scene that even states what particular fish is to be used for particular dishes; there is mention of *lumpia* and *pancit lang-lang*; Rizal even provides the name of a restaurant or two; and then there is mention of two different ways of serving hot chocolate, depending on the importance of the visitor: the rich and thick *chocolate eh* for important guests and the diluted or watery *chocolate ah* for pests.

The problem with the "Noli" and "Fili" in schools has nothing to do with the novels but rather the setting in which they are read. The novels of Rizal are studied to pass a course; they are not read for pleasure. Like Francisco Balagtas' "Florante at Laura," the novels of Rizal are read to instill love of country rather than a love, or at the very least, an appreciation for great literature.

There is only one reference to food in Apolinario Mabini's writings, written when he was in exile in Guam and sick of canned meat. Our Sublime Paralytic persuaded the authorities to allow Filipino prisoners to be fed fresh food from a market rather than canned goods. There are other references, like Marcelo H. del Pilar eating Filipino food in Paris with his hands or the great banquets organized by Pedro Paterno to celebrate the ratification of the declaration of independence in Kawit by the Malolos Congress. We have unpublished materials like a 17th-century friar's cookbook used in the Philippines, and the 19th-century cookbook of Juliana Gorricho, mother-in-law of Juan Luna, who not only kept a recipe book but the names of guests and what was served them.

There is a recent compilation of *adobo* recipes that reminded me of Charles de Gaulle who said that it was difficult to rule France because it was a country with 300 varieties of cheese. Well the Philippines is an archipelago of over 7,000 islands with thousands of ways of cooking *adobo*.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

When cultures meet

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

AN IVORY VIRGIN MARY AND A SLEEPING SANTO NIÑO with Chinese eyes. A blue and white jar, dating back to the Qing dynasty, where you could lock up chocolate. A gold "*ibu dan anak*" (mother-and-child) ornament to hold together a *batik* blouse.

These are among the objects on display at the Ayala Museum until May 27, as part of a 6-in-1 exhibit called "Chinese Diaspora: Art Streams from the Mainland." The six exhibits include The Robert Villanueva Collection of Chinese Trade Wares; The Peranakan Legacy; Tsinoy: Mestizo Art in Colonial Times; Damian Domingo: The First Great Filipino Painter; Evidence Bags: Claudine Sia; and China Gaze: Valeria Cavestany.

The first four are historical exhibits, while the last two are modern art. But all six come together to show what happens when cultures meet, and interact.

Talking wares

My favorite exhibit is that of trade wares. Most are from China, although there are also pieces from Vietnam and Thailand. Curated by Rita Tan, one of the foremost authorities on Chinese ceramics, the exhibit brings together all kinds of Chinese ceramics that were transported on extensive trade routes that ran throughout the entire Southeast Asian region. These were originally in the collection of H. Otley Beyer, the American anthropologist and archaeologist, but were later bought up by Roberto and Corazon Grau Villanueva.

This exhibit reminds us that 168 and Divisoria are only the latest developments of a centuries-old trading relationship. More than a thousand years ago, the Chinese realized the trading potential in Southeast Asia. The Chinese knew that in exchange for their ceramics, as well as other products such as silk, they could obtain valuable forest and mineral products from their neighbors. If the ceramics could talk, we'd have wondrous tales of that trading relationship.

The Ayala exhibits offer glimpses into the dimensions of this trade. The wares come from several dynasties, the oldest piece being Yue ware dating back to the 10th century. They come from different parts of China, including Zhejiang, Henan, Jiangxi, Guangdong and Fujian. The wares from that last province interested me the most, and it was thrilling to learn that Nan-an, from where my paternal grandfather came from, was a major producer of these ceramics.

Most of the trade wares had very practical uses, from plates and beakers and bowls for dining to the huge jars for storing and fermenting (imagine pre-colonial *patis* or *bagoong*!) foods, and, let's not forget, drinks, as in intoxicating beverages.

Many of the objects combine the utilitarian and the decorative. A figurine showing a boy on a water buffalo, for example, turns out to be a water dropper. Next to one of these wares is something that looks quite naughty: a couple in a rather amorous position. I couldn't tell if it is meant to be a water dropper as well, but try to imagine our ancestors displaying such figurines in their homes.

Many of the trade wares are exhibited in the homes of the rich and famous as prestige goods, a way of displaying one's wealth. But I suspect even our ancestors already saw these wares as a way of showing off. Many of the ceramics were excavated from burial sites, again a way of indicating one's status, as well as an expression of beliefs in an after-life where the valuable ceramics could still be used. Who said you can't take it all with you?

Mestizo art

The Chinese who migrated out to Southeast Asian countries included artisans who had the traditional ceramics designs not only in their heads but also the skills to replicate the technology. Thus, in parts of modern Thailand and Malaysia, you have jars produced in kilns that were established way back in time by Chinese migrants. This is why you have to be very careful when you buy "antique" ceramics: more likely than not, that jar may be 21st-century made-in-Thailand rather than some 12th-century Chinese ceramic.

In other cases, Chinese migrants modified their artistic skills, incorporating local motifs, designs and processes to produce "mestizo art." Three of the Ayala Museum exhibits give fine examples of these hybrids. "The Peranakan Legacy" is an exhibit on loan from the Asian Civilizations Museum, showing everything from embroidery and beadwork to intricate jewelry and ornaments, to massive sculpted furniture, all produced by the Peranakan or mestizo Chinese-Malay.

A Qing blue and white jar with a lock, intended to store (hoard?) chocolate, reminds us of the prosperity of these mestizo classes, one which is reflected in the extravagance of their artwork. Some of these families even had their own jewelers-in-residence, something which rich Filipino (including Chinese mestizo) families did too in the 19th century, to make sure the craftsmen did not substitute or filch valuable raw materials.

Ambeth Ocampo has described in his column the exhibit, "Tsinoy: Mestizo Art in Colonial Times," which he curated. While the Peranakan exhibit was breath-taking, I still found charm in the "Tsinoy" exhibit, a small selection of hardwood *santos* and jewelry that show Chinese influences—the *singkit* eyes on some of the images, including a Virgin Mary and a sleeping Santo Niño. One statue of the Virgin Mary, from its facial features as well as its dress, could have passed for the Buddhist Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy).

Another exhibit shows the work of another Chinese *mestizo*, Damian Domingo who established the first art school in the country. It's intriguing though how one self-portrait shows him looking very Caucasian, without the slightest hint of his Chinese ancestry.

Unleashed

The two more modern art exhibits show how the fascination with things Chinese remains with us today, incorporated into the "evidence bags" (actually glassine envelopes with photographs and postcards) of Claudine Sia and the media light boxes of Valeria Cavestany, using light boxes with acrylic renditions of China and the Chinese.

There's contrast and continuity in these exhibits. The old Chinese wares are exquisite, but there's contrast between their staid colors—blue and white, celadon, brown—and those of "mestizo art," where there is an explosion of colors and a move away from traditional designs. It almost seems as if the Chinese artisans and artists, unleashed in new hothouse environments of Southeast Asia, gave free rein to their imagination, whether in the Peranakan clothing, or the contemporary work of Sia.

Yet even when mestizo art turns whimsical, kitschy or opulent, you find continuity, a connection to mainland Chinese culture, in the designs, in the workmanship. Understanding the Chinese influence in Filipino culture becomes all the more important in our age of globalization and now, the Filipino diaspora. Will we, too, leave our mark elsewhere, even as we bring home the sights and sounds of our overseas sojourns to blend into our already eclectic cultural potpourri?

A story common to women

FOR THE SECOND TIME, AND for similar reasons, Kris Aquino is in the headlines. And once again, she, her partner and another girl are the subject of idle talk and gossip nationwide. The Partido ng Manggagawa would like to take part in this "talk of the town" but in a different context—to provide a women's perspective on the issue.

The Kris Aquino story is the story of countless women—rich and poor. To most of the Filipino people in Philippine society, men's philandering is not only acceptable but a measure of manhood—"more women, more macho." But when it comes to women, having been into more than one relationship or a string of relationships is not only immoral; it is also tantamount to acting like a whore. This reflects the inequality between men and women in our society; there is a double standard on the issue of morality.

Confronted with a situation similar to what Kris is in right now—pregnant with a philandering husband—women usually have second thoughts about ending a relationship. There lies the difference between rich and poor women. To rich and famous women like Kris, a kid without a father is a no-no, especially, with a super-religious family. To poor and desperate women like Hope—regardless of whether she is telling the truth or not—the considerations are totally different: how to feed, clothe, shelter and educate their children is a greater concern more than the right to be happy and free from abuse and prejudice.

Inasmuch as this is the campaign period, the Partido ng Manggagawa insists that candidates speak of platforms; but the love triangle between Hope, Kris and James is not just show-biz news. There are many Filipinas like Hope, women with a bleak future because they are single parents with no jobs. Society must come to their aid since their predicament is not entirely of their own making.

The Partido ng Manggagawa campaigns not just for workers' demands but also for women's issues, as shown by our support for Nicole in her fight for justice. Among these demands are three months of paid maternity leave for women workers, and protection against sexual harassment and against gender discrimination in the hiring and promotion of women.

—ETHEL FORTALEZA,
Partido ng Manggagawa,
5 Matiyaga St., Barangay Central,
Quezon City

Do they teach democracy in RP schools?

IN HIS COLUMN "THE POWER TO idiotize" (INQUIRER, 2/25/07), Randy David wrote that the media are society's main source of information. He also suggested that important shows like "I-Witness" should be scheduled in time-slots that allow more viewers to watch, that is, when most people are still awake. He further noted that despite our people's high literacy rate, they don't seem to know how to choose public officials.

Let me ask David a question I've been asking people for years. I went to public schools. One would expect that as facilities of a democratic country, public schools would teach at least the fundamental tenets of democracy. But they don't. I remember that in my second grade, the teacher told us about the Kalayaan Islands being part of the Philippines. But I don't remember being taught the Bill of Rights or the importance and relevance of voting during elections.

Of course, despite this lack of democratic grounding, I grew up believing in democracy and knowing my Bill of Rights. But this was because I watched American TV and read a lot of books. If I had based my understanding of my rights solely on what I observed around me, I doubt if I would have developed the proper democratic outlook. You see, the media are powerful, they have the responsibility to inform and educate the public. But doesn't David think that the school is by far a more powerful educator?

My parents are school teachers, and I have to say that they get respect from their students like no broadcaster or media man can ever hope for. Teachers have under their tutelage young minds; so they are the ideal persons to teach the principles of democracy, the Bill of Rights and right of suffrage. One would think that for a country which had been a former colony, the first order of business is to establish an educational system that informs its citizens about democracy; or, in fact, train them how to live in a democratic country.

But no, for some reason, our leaders think it is best to leave Filipinos to wallow in their old, "undemocratic" beliefs. These old beliefs are still very much in place; and they are probably the reason Filipinos vote the way they do.

Why don't our schools teach the values of democracy? Why don't they teach the Bill of Rights? Or the significance of the right to vote?

—BRIAN BROTARLO,
arv_brotarlo_05@yahoo.com

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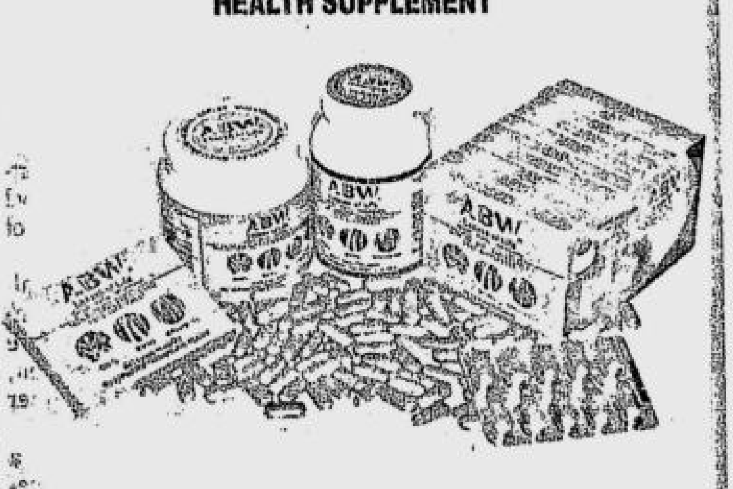

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How veterans can collect arrears

WE, THE VETERANS OF WORLD War II, would like to thank Malacañang Presidential Assistant for Veterans Affairs Jesus Terry Ferrer Adevoso for his very reassuring answer to Jose Q. Borbon's letter. (INQUIRER, 2/14/07) He could be the grandson of the late veteran Eleuterio "Terry" Adevoso who worked hard for us during his lifetime.

Indeed, we cannot blame the government, particularly the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo and those of her predecessors, for not implementing RA 7696, the law that would have given us, upon reaching the age of 70, a monthly disability pension of P1,700 and our spouses, P500.

But Adevoso insinuated that we vote for the administration congressional candidates in the coming May 14 elections in order that they can push through the approval of SB 2241 and HB 5380 in the 14th Congress. The proposed laws will settle the P21-billion arrears (that have accumulated over the past 12 years) that the government owes the veterans.

Indeed, it is high time for change. We veterans, now in the twilight of our lives who can still cast our votes, should rally behind the opposition candidates to put a stop to the wasteful spending of the people's money and provide funding for the implementation of RA 7696 before the final curtain falls on us.

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA,
Veterans Federation of the Philippines, Camarines Norte ,
Daet, Camarines Norte

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JOVITO PALPARAN KILLED MY FATHER!!!
JOVITO PALP
MR. ALSTON HEAR US! LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL!
STOP POLITICAL KILLINGS
Rev. RAUL DOMINGO

LEFTIST activists demand to be heard

INQUIRER PHOTO

Why are so few people outraged by extrajudicial killings?

I AM SO RELIEVED THAT THE Melo report and UN special rapporteur Philip Alston have condemned the killing of activists and journalists in the Philippines.

But one thing still bothers me. I don't know why there are not more people who are outraged about the killings. It seems as though it took foreign pressure for the administration to respond to these killings. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, the College Editors Guild and the Makati Business Club were among the few organizations that have raised their voices to denounce the killings, but many civil society groups have, strangely, kept their silence. Why?

What bothers me most about the murders is that they are also killing democracy. How? A young, idealistic activist might see that democracy doesn't work when people who legally promote justice get assassinated. This leaves them with few options—and chilling ones: submit to the oppression in silence; or reject democracy altogether and go to the mountains and join the New People's Army. Either way, some elements in the military are killing what we hold precious—democracy.

In these murders, there is a lesson from Nazi Germany. A German Protestant minister, denouncing the sin of indifference, came up with this story: At first the police came and arrested the Jews, and I said nothing because I had no Jews in my congregation. Then the police came for the communists, and I said nothing, because I had no communists in my congregation. Then they came for the trade unionists, and since I had no trade unionists in my congregation, I said nothing. Then they came for the Catholic priests, and I said nothing, because obviously there were no Catholics in my congregation. Then they came for me, and no one spoke up against my arrest, because there was no one left to protest.

The killings might just go on. When will leftists living in Manila get shot? Then when will the military men train their guns on opposition "destabilizers"? Who will be the next target? The killings won't stop until people start to complain.

People should stop seeing the killings as a minor problem that endangers only the lives of journalists and leftists. And the President should replace the Cabinet officials who keep denying that there is a problem. She needs to restore democracy.

—JONATHAN FOE,
931 Ma Cristina,
Sampaloc, Manila

Electricity should be part of senatorial debate

THIS REFERS TO ELPI CUNA'S letter. (INQUIRER, 2/16/07)

1. Cuna says there have been no adjustments in Meralco's distribution rates. True to a point, but only because the increases granted by the regulators have been consistently reversed by the courts, starting with the 1994 increase order that led to the P38-billion refund ordered by the Supreme Court.

Besides, the Lopez Group, which manages Meralco, has been making huge profits from the generation business through its favored independent power producers (IPPs). Is it any wonder why 55.7 percent of our electricity cost goes to generation? Is it any surprise that the Lopez-owned Meralco IPPs—First Gen, First Gas, Quezon Power—are all among the Top 20 money-makers of the country?

With profits neatly tucked into generation, the Lopezes have only token interest in the profits from distribution, a regulated industry whose books are subject to public scrutiny.

2. Meralco always gloats over its being a mere collection agent, saying the bulk of cost goes to generation, the distribution component being just 16.3 percent (not 14 percent as claimed by Cuna).

Meralco has excluded system loss (which is 9.1 percent of our bill) from distribution cost. There are two kinds of losses—line/technical and non-technical/pilferage—both of which reflect the efficiency (or lack of it) of the distribution utility. As a measure of distribution efficiency, system loss should be part of distribution cost which, in the case of Meralco, should be 25.4 percent instead of 16.3 percent.

3. The so-called customer choice plan for those in the 750-kilowatt range will benefit barely 300,000 commercial and industrial accounts who consume 65 percent of total sales—to the exclusion of the close to 3.8 million household customers and consumers like us.

4. Re government and taxes on electricity, why is the subsidy paid by consumers to cover the lifeline rates still subject to VAT? We are unjustly burdened by having to finance what is obviously a political decision of the government, and are taxed for doing so. Check the item on "Government Taxes" at the back of the monthly bill where "Distribution Rev & Subs" are subject to 12 percent VAT.

5. Finally, Meralco does the percentages, comparing power cost to other production cost components, to downplay its impact on overall cost. I do not think that is the proper comparison to make. Meralco's rate is higher than most electric cooperatives and all other privately owned utilities, despite its having the lion's share of the market, 70 percent of Luzon and 60 percent nationwide. Definitely, Meralco's rates can be lowered, if it undertakes prudent procurement of power supply, terminates sweetheart deals with generation companies owned by Meralco management, trims its system loss and cuts operating costs.

I hope electricity becomes part of the senatorial debate.

—CENON MAKALINAO,
cmakalinao@yahoo.com

Corruption and incompetence

INQUIRER.NET VOICES

I AM QUITE DISAPPOINTED WITH ACTORS running for office. Corruption is not the only major problem in our country; incompetence is another.

Why do entertainers run for office? The answer is that the entertainment business is on the decline, as people can no longer afford cinema tickets, which is why they buy pirated DVDs. And there is a lot of money in politics.

I have lost confidence in our country's ability to progress because of the incompetent people in government. I feel so ashamed to invite my friends to go to our country for a holiday, as they themselves have lost their trust in us. I am tired of praising the country, although there are beautiful places for my foreign friends to see.

I hope the intelligent people out there will wake up and run for office.—**Josephine Lewis, Channel Islands, United Kingdom (via e-mail)**

* * *

In the research company where I work here in Boston, most of my co-workers from different countries know about the Philippines and its political circus. I am so embarrassed that most of them make fun of our having several members of one family trying to grab seats in the Senate.

I would like to appeal to my fellow Filipinos. We need to end political dynasties.—**Coco Alinsug, Boston, Massachusetts (via e-mail)**

* * *

"I am, of course, saddened by the fact that after all these years, Erap will not endorse my candidacy," Vicente Sotto III lamented.

What did he expect after abandoning ship? He is such a fool to even hope for an endorsement.—**Constante Burgos, San Jose, California (via e-mail)**

* * *

Richard Gomez and Cesar Montano have this illusion of becoming effective and productive in the Senate. To them I say: Your gain will be the people's million-dollar pain for the next 20 years. You can't do the job and your brains are not meant for politics. But if your intention is just to get rich—filthy rich—then join the stinking bandwagon.

To Tito Sotto: I used to look up to you as a politician and lawmaker of principle, but your party-switching sucks!—**Pablo Escobar, Cebu City (via e-mail)**

* * *

I am not going to vote for Aquilino Pimentel III. I have just listened to the Q&A on the Inquirer.net podcasts. The answers he gave were those of a neophyte. He needs more experience.

If this message reaches him, I would like to say: Sir, if you ever win, I hope you will do something that will change the lives of the people, especially the poor. I am sorry, but you have to convince me why I should vote for you.—**Stephen Vito, Mandaluyong City (via e-mail)**

* * *

I have lived in Sydney for 25 years, and for my retirement years, I am very tempted to go back to my country of birth.

The economic indicators and the stable peso are an incentive for me to buy property in the Philippines. However, I am wary of the political situation in the country if the opposition wins the election and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is unseated through people power or impeachment. That would surely bring the peso down. That is the only downside I see in investing in the Philippines.

On the other hand, now is probably a good time for me to invest and just hope that the political situation will stabilize and the Filipinos will not vote for opportunistic oppositionists who will undo the six long years of economic hard work that the present administration has done.—**Emiliano de Guzman, Sydney, Australia (via e-mail)**

* * *

I find Rep. Francis Escudero very articulate and knowledgeable about most of the issues that our electorate needs to know. He deserves to win as senator, hands down. I hope that he will continue to keep his convictions even if the cost is high.

Long live all the GO candidates! Cheer up, for the good will always triumph.—**Yoly Tuadles, Gardenia, California (via e-mail)**

Wednesday Group candidates vow to conduct clean campaign

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE FOUR REELECTIONIST SENATORS belonging to the Wednesday Group have agreed to conduct a decent campaign and raise the level of political debate by not attacking other senatorial candidates.

On Wednesday, Senate President Manuel Villar, Majority Leader Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, and Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto came to this agreement during their reunion with Vice President Noli de Castro, a member of the group when he was a senator.

It was De Castro who hosted a dinner for the group at La Mesa Grill, a restaurant owned by Pangilinan at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City. The dinner started at 5:30 and ended at 8:30 Wednesday night.

The five last met in De Castro's office last month when they decided to go their separate ways during the campaign.

Recto and Arroyo are with the administration's Team Unity ticket, Villar is with the Genuine Opposition coalition, while Pangilinan is campaigning as an independent.

All the members of the group hold high positions in government, and thus have certain responsibilities to the public even during elections, according to Arroyo.

Villar is Senate President, Pangilinan is the Majority Leader while Arroyo and Recto chair powerful committees in the Senate.

"We want to demonstrate that a campaign can be done decently. We could continue to hold a pleasant debate and elevate the political campaign to a higher level. No mudslinging, no bitterness, no black propaganda. That's passé. That's not good for the people," Arroyo told the INQUIRER in an interview after the dinner.

Arroyo said the group also wanted to set an example to young voters and inspire the electorate.

He acknowledged that the group's members did not always agree 100 percent on certain issues, particularly on which senatorial ticket to join.

"In fact, we agonized over it for three weeks," referring to their decision to temporarily part ways. "But we respect each other's decision. We're not a monolithic organization," Arroyo said.

Pangilinan, who has been a target of attacks from the opposition for not joining them, said he had no regrets campaigning solo.

Pangilinan said he would rather deal with the issues, not personalities.

"We need to think outside the box and approach the campaign with new ideas and new perspectives," he said.

He said the people were tired of "politics as usual. We begin to change our politics by changing the way we engage our political adversaries and the way we were able to inspire the electorate."

Arroyo said that because he and Recto decided to join the Team Unity ticket, it was their responsibility to campaign for the 10 other senatorial candidates of the administration.

"Once you join a team, you have to accept your responsibility to go for the group," he said.

De Castro said he was pleased with their strong friendship and expressed confidence that this would not be destroyed by political intrigue.

"They are all decent men and statesmen. They are turned off by mudslinging and I myself was a victim of black propaganda when I ran for vice president in 2004," De Castro told the INQUIRER.

De Castro reiterated his pledge to campaign for the four senators.

Recto said he was happy to see all of them at the same table again, dining and chatting.

LP warns GO: Stop at 11; Kiko still 12th candidate

From page A1

"That is a matter between Senator Villar and Maceda... We do not know the circumstances of that episode," Drilon said.

Complications

Florencio Abad, LP vice chair and former Batanes representative, said replacing Pangilinan "will complicate our situation because we are committed to supporting Kiko."

"I like to think LP is a major [opposition] coalition partner... so they will respect our position on that," he said.

Pangilinan said he would rather attribute to "confusion" and a "misreading of body language" his unwanted inclusion in the GO senatorial slate.

He did not lay the blame on Villar despite his role in the mix-up.

Nobody's fault

Pangilinan and Villar, who are seeking reelection as independent candidates, are part of the Senate's so-called Wednesday Group along with Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto, who are on the administration ticket.

"I will not impugn bad faith on anyone," Pangilinan said.

Pangilinan, who has insisted from the start that he will campaign on his own, said he was not blaming anyone. "It's nobody's fault. These things happen," he said.

"As well intentioned as they may be, I suppose in the rush to put up a slate and meet the deadline, sometimes you don't have complete information, a complete appreciation of the facts. So there may have been a misreading of body language," he said.

Focus on larger issues

Pangilinan said he wanted to "move on and focus on the bigger picture and the larger issues."

Pangilinan said he declined the administration's offer to once more run on its ticket "on a matter of principle" because he was part of the LP faction that called for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation in 2005 over the "Hello Garci" poll fraud scandal.

The Drilon wing of the LP broke away from the administration coalition when it called for the resignation of Ms Arroyo.

The other LP wing is that of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who remains a supporter of Ms Arroyo.

Pangilinan earlier said he preferred to run as an independent rather than join the opposition slate due to the strong objections posed by loyalists of the late Fernando Poe Jr.

Pangilinan, as Senate majority leader, had presided over the canvassing of votes for the 2004 presidential election. Despite protests of fraud, Ms Arroyo was proclaimed the winner.

"I can't understand the intensity of criticism (against Pangilinan).... When we realized what happened, we called on the President to resign," Abad said.

"That has to be acknowledged because that took a toll on us as a party and (on Pangilinan) as a senator," he said.

Noynoy also campaigning for Mar as president in 2010

From page A1

tions and opens us up to various scenarios, which may derail our democratic processes," he said.

Aquino was referring to the plan of Ms Arroyo and her allies to amend the Constitution to pave the way for a shift to a parliamentary form of government. Had Malacañang's plans not been thwarted last year by the Supreme Court, the Church and other sectors, the shift would have abolished the Senate.

Extrajudicial killings

Aquino also criticized Ms Arroyo for purportedly suggesting that the unabated extrajudicial killings in the country were "a mere election campaign issue that was being exploited by the opposition."

"Contrary to (her) insinuation, the merciless killing of activists and journalists is not a mere election campaign issue," he said in a statement.

"To the victims, this is a matter of life and death. To the widows and the orphans, these unabated murders bring a lifetime of pain, deprivation and sorrow."

Insensitivity

Aquino said, the President's supposed pronouncement "betrays her insensitivity to the sufferings of the victims of the extrajudicial killings and their families."

More than 800 people, mostly leftist activists, have been murdered or reported missing since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

But the military says most of the deaths could be attributed to internal fighting in the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston said last week that whatever the figure the killing of journalists and leftist activists in the country was distressing.

Alston urged Ms Arroyo to persuade the military to "acknowledge" the fact and conduct a "genuine" investigation.

The Melo Commission, which Ms Arroyo formed last year to look into the killings, linked retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and other military commanders to the killings.

NOYNOY: Bring another Roxas to the Palace

Serge O is new GO campaign manager

From page A1

Osmeña, whose second six-year term will end on June 30, will be the "overall campaign head," GO campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano said yesterday.

"The decision was made for him to come in in two weeks' time," Tamano said.

Osmeña declined to comment, saying he still had to "familiarize" himself with the organization. "Please call in two weeks," he said in a text message.

In Roxas City, Ejercito said it was he who had recommended that Osmeña replace him as chief overseer of the opposition's intent to capture 11 seats in the Senate.

Ejercito, whose father is ousted President Joseph Estrada, the acknowledged head of the opposition, will bow out of the senatorial campaign to concentrate on his own campaign for reelection as mayor of the family bailiwick of San Juan.

The campaign period for local positions will start on March 30.

"I am the one who recommended [Osmeña] to replace me as the new campaign manager. He will be effective in bringing the issues to the people," Ejercito said.

From the start

Tamano said Osmeña had "from the start" been actively assisting the GO campaign by setting up the anti-election fraud committee and "helping in strategy."

Osmeña won his second six-year term in 2001 under the People Power Coalition put up by the newly installed Arroyo administration.

He is now with the opposition PDP-Laban party with Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

The GO executive committee had formed the antifraud committee to safeguard its candidates' votes and prevent a repeat of the purported cheating that occurred in 2004 when President Macapagal-Arroyo beat opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr.

Osmeña was tapped to lead the committee.

'More stature, more senior'

It was earlier reported that Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Ejercito's half-brother, would replace him as GO campaign manager.

Ejercito denied that there ever was a jockeying for position between him and the senator.

"Definitely, the one who will replace me will have more stature and will be more senior," Ejercito said.

According to Tamano, Sen. Franklin Drilon, president of the Liberal Party, was also considered for the post.

Drilon's second six-year term will also end on June 30.

Tamano said that as far as he was concerned, Senator Estrada was never discussed as a possible replacement for Ejercito.

"He (Ejercito) will still be active. He will probably head the campaign in the National Capital Region," Tamano said.

Ejercito said that in the next few days, GO would start concentrating on projecting its senatorial slate in the media to answer challenges posed by the administration's Team Unity and to pose questions as well to the members of the slate endorsed by Ms Arroyo.

"By this, we will let the administration answer all the questions and issues we want it to answer," Ejercito said.

Gonzalez blamed for GO rally fiasco in Iloilo

From page A1

as four days before the scheduled rally, there was already talk that "the lights will go out" during the event.

Gonzalez, a former Iloilo congressman, laughed off the accusation. He not only denied involvement in the alleged threats but also said none had been made in the first place.

He said the GO camp was only using the threats as an excuse for the low turnout at the rally, estimating that less than 200 people showed up.

"They had ghosts in their rally. I don't know why they blame me. I'm here. The administration did not even mind that rally there," Gonzalez told reporters in Manila.

"They are just looking for an excuse because they had no crowd. That GO has turned out to mean 'go home' because they got hungry. It's ridiculous," he said.

Jan. 17 assault

GO had intended to use the Jan. 17 assault on Tupas and his followers as its battle cry in its campaign in Iloilo.

Its candidates were to have rallied the people against the administration and its purported harassment of its political enemies like Tupas.

The governor had been ordered dismissed by the Ombudsman on corruption charges, and the police team that barged into the capitol in January were to have bodily removed him from the building to allow his successor to hold office.

A temporary restraining order issued by the Court of Appeals stopped the raiders in their tracks, but not before they had broken glass panels and pointed high-powered rifles at unarmed Tupas supporters.

"Many text messages also proliferated in the days after the Iloilo siege. Some said another dismissal or suspension order would be slapped on the governor. All turned out to be hoaxes," Mejorada said.

"We can take dismissals and suspensions any time, but when lives are concerned, we can no longer take chances," he said.

Barotac Viejo Mayor Raul Tupas, a son of the governor's and a former Army captain, told reporters that there was no time to verify the text warnings received at the provincial capitol and by their leaders in the field.

"The time between the start of the rally and when the text messages started coming in was too short to verify the information," said the mayor, a 1994 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy.

He said his family's political enemies were given to sowing disinformation.

"Remember that at the time of the Iloilo siege, there were reports that a truckload of [New People's Army rebels] were in the capitol, and that we had guns inside," the mayor said.

'Leading in surveys'

According to Mejorada, it was Sen. Franklin Drilon, Liberal Party president and a native of Iloilo, and San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, GO campaign manager, who decided to cancel the rally on the recommendation of Tupas and his staff.

"I cannot put the lives of my candidates in danger, especially since they are leading in the surveys," Ejercito said.

He said there would probably be no more nighttime campaign activities for GO candidates in the next few days.

"I don't know the details of the threat, but I guess it's related to something local between the Tupas family and the Gonzalezes," he added.

GO candidates Aquilino Pimentel III, Sonia Roco, Nikki Coseteng, Loren Legarda and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III yesterday motored out of Iloilo City en route to another LP stronghold—Roxas City in Capiz.

"I'm disappointed that the rally didn't push through. But perhaps there will be another time for us to hold a rally in Iloilo," Legarda told reporters.

No recorded complaint

Gonzalez said a check of police records would show that no threat was reported concerning the GO rally.

"There is no record of any complaint of any bomb threat or whatever. If that is true, [Tupas and company] should have entered it into the police blotter and sought support and assistance from the police."

He said he did not believe the claim that the rally was canceled because GO did not want to risk people's lives.

Gonzalez also pointed out that when Tupas holed up in the capitol last month in defiance of the suspension order against him, he was able to gather thousands of supporters—yet he failed to muster a crowd for the GO rally despite his claim of being backed by 42 mayors.

The justice secretary challenged the opposition to a numbers test, to show who had more supporters in Iloilo: "If they want, they can test us. I can gather 5,000 people in an hour."

He claimed that it would be a miracle if GO won in Iloilo. He described the opposition as disunited, saying that one of its candidates, Rep. Francis Escudero, arrived early for the rally and left ahead of his fellow candidates.

Lacson's plane diverted

As for Gonzalez's purported record of preventing his political enemies from campaigning in Iloilo, Mejorada adverted to an incident in 2004 when then opposition presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson's aircraft was prevented from landing at an airport in the province.

Lacson confirmed the incident and said he believed that Gonzalez may have "influenced" the Air Transportation Office in Iloilo not to clear his plane for landing.

"We had to look for another landing area as a result," the GO candidate said in a phone interview. "It was done in bad faith because lives were placed in danger. One will not just fly without first giving notice that one intends to land at a particular airport. And then, all of a sudden, one is not given clearance to land."

But Gonzalez denied involvement in the incident.

Lawmaker says GO rally cancelled due to low turnout

By Norman Bordadora

ILOILO CITY—EVEN ILOILO Rep. Rolex Suplico, an opposition lawmaker, could not believe that security threats had prodded the Genuine Opposition to call off its Wednesday rally.

Suplico, a nephew of Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas, said it was the low turnout at the provincial capitol that could have caused the cancellation of the rally.

"There were only about 100 people [present], and that included the peanut and cigarette vendors," said the third-term congressman said to be considering running for governor against his uncle in the May elections.

Fake bomb threat

"The rally of the Genuine Opposition was cancelled due to a fake bomb threat," he said, adding that the provincial capitol was "a very secure place."

"I don't know if they were given funds to come up with a crowd, or if they spent it properly," Suplico said of the GO leaders in Iloilo led by Governor Tupas and his sons, Barotac Viejo Mayor Raul Tupas and Board Member Niel Tupas Jr.

Suplico said he had yet to make up his mind on running against the incumbent, a candidate of the Liberal Party.

The congressman's mother is a sister of the governor's. Tupas was instrumental in Suplico's election to Congress.

Uncle vs nephew

If uncle and nephew both run for governor, there will be two oppositionists seeking the same position.

Suplico, a member of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, was in Iloilo when the GO rally was cancelled. *With a report from Edra Benedicto, Inquirer Visayas*

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Health risks at call centers probed

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—RESEARCHERS of a Baguio hospital have started investigating medical problems that appear to have risen from call centers and other business process outsourcing (BPO) facilities operating at the Baguio City Economic Zone.

Dr. Leopoldo Calimlim, chief of an industrial medicine facility at the Notre Dame Hospital, said doctors had been treating 10 to 14 call center employees at the zone every day for various medical complaints.

This has compelled Danilo Reyes, president of the Business Process Association of the Philippines (BPAP), to commission a comprehensive medical investigation, Calimlim said.

Reyes is also the country manager of the call center giant Client Logic Philippines, which merged in January with Sitel Philippines to form the new Sitel Corp.

At a Wednesday press conference that was organized to announce the merger, Reyes said these medical studies were essential because they would help the country's business process outsourcing industry get information about potential health hazards at BPO work places.

People matter

"Without our people, there are no companies," he told reporters.

Calimlim said existing medical reports had been confined to the effects of sleep deprivation on industrial workers.

Several studies documented the illnesses affecting workers at Silicon Valley in the United States. These led local doctors to examine call center employees for gastroenteritis, insomnia, and peptic ulcers, which are prevalent among workers abroad, Calimlim said.

But studies dealing with Filipino call centers are few, much less with workers assigned to work on different time zones, he said.

Most centers assign workers to the night shift when most of the work traffic occurs. This is because most call centers have American clients. The US time zone is 12 hours behind Philippine time, so most workers end up working in that shift.

Calimlim said Baguio doctors had been dealing with employees who suffered weakened immune systems, which often led to serious ailments.

Lack of sleep

Doctors need to find out if the weakened immunity is caused by sleep deprivation, diet, or the conditions of the BPO facilities, he said.

He said the probe was inspired by former employees of a leading semiconductor firm at the Baguio City Economic Zone who blamed their work conditions for their illnesses, including cancer.

But researchers could not find any conclusive evidence linking the workers suffering terminal illnesses to the firm's equipment, Calimlim said.

BCEZ officials said they conducted an independent survey of work conditions inside these facilities and discovered workers who suffered from back pains and muscle ailments.

"Many of these conditions are caused by heavy lifting and duties that require physical movement, but most of the [factories here] have corrected this," an official said.

JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

CORN FEAST
Farmers of Banga, South Cotabato, flaunt their good harvest of corn with a bid for entry in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest corn grill in the world. Organizers claim the grill measures six kilometers long.

Groups demand jobs abroad for 18-yr-olds

BAGUIO CITY—MIGRANT WORKERS and members of the Gabriela party-list group picketed the office of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration here on Thursday to demand that the government finally allow 18-year-old women to seek jobs abroad.

The new rules regulating overseas Filipino workers bar individuals, who are below 23 years old, from accepting overseas contracts.

The prohibition adjusted the 25-year-age ceiling imposed by previous rules, according to Delfina Camarillo, chief of the regional extension unit of the POEA-Cordillera.

"We already modified the age limit to 23 years old [based on the governing board Resolution No. 14 series of 2007 of the POEA]. But we still do not understand why we are still being criticized for this," Camarillo said after conducting a dialogue with the OFWs.

Enforcing a prohibition against workers below 23 removes from them the opportunity to find work, said Flora Belinan, a nominee of Gabriela and former Cordillera coordinator of the Migrante party-list group.

Belinan said 18-year-old workers should be considered mature enough to travel and work abroad because they could be considered mature and capable.

The age restriction compels workers and their recruitment agencies to fake their ages, she said.

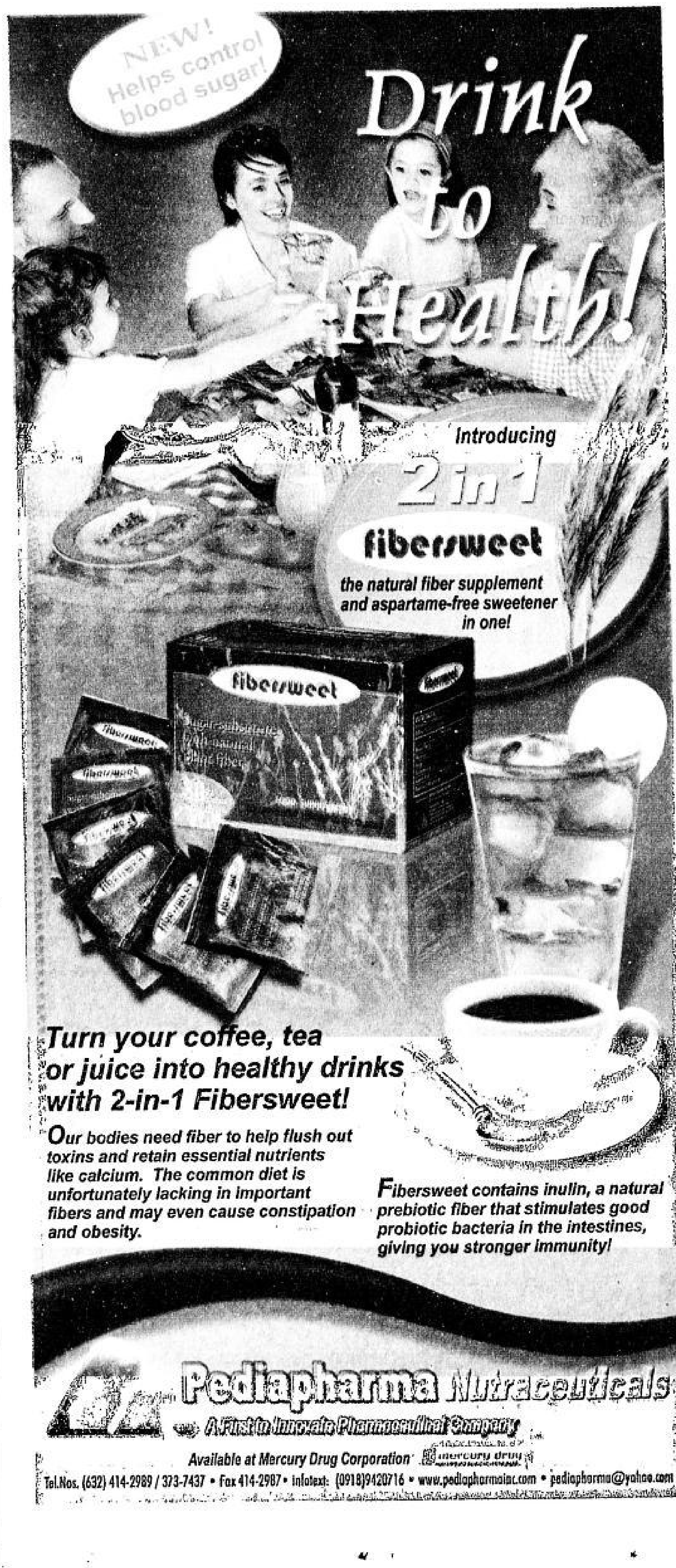
"Setting a minimum age of 25 will only push recruitment agencies to falsify documents of Filipinos who want to seek jobs abroad," she said.

According to her, the government has been unable to protect underaged women from traveling abroad using fake passports.

On paper, a minimum age requirement for OFWs protects young women from abuse in other countries, said Vernie Yocogan-Diano, former chair of the Innabuyog-Gabriela.

"But with the poverty situation and [the] increasing unemployment rate in the country, many Filipinos will go to [all] lengths [including] faking their age just to [be able to] work in other countries," she said.

"The [POEA] board feels that the maturity and vulnerability can adequately be addressed by adapting the age of 23 as a minimum limit, provided that adequate preparatory interventions are made by government," according to Resolution No. 14. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



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JOCKEYING FOR LAKAS ENDORSEMENT

Baby A warns of Pangasinan poll violence

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

RACHEL ARENAS, Baby's daughter, says she's ready to enter the chaos of politics after several years in the United States.

LAWYER Gallant Soriano, who wants to run for congressman and is pitted against Arenas' daughter, is banking on his grassroots support.

SOCIALITE Baby Arenas warns of violence if her candidates, including her daughter, are not endorsed as official candidates of the Lakas.

PHOTOS BY RAY ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

ELECTION 07

CALASIAO, PANGASINAN—Socialite Rosemarie "Baby" Arenas on Wednesday warned that election violence could break out in Pangasinan if Gov. Victor Agbayani insisted on putting up Lakas-CMD candidates in towns and cities where incumbent officials were already administration party members.

In a news conference here, Arenas said Lakas-CMD mayors attending a meeting at her farm in Malasiqui town had warned told her of bloodshed should they have opponents under the same administration party.

Arenas has been very visible in the province's third district to support her daughter, Rachel, in her congressional bid.

The young Arenas wants to run under the Lakas-CMD.

"That was what I was told and this is what Vice Governor [Oscar] Lambino wants to prevent because the mayors now are so mad," she said.

Lambino, Lakas-CMD provincial chair, said in the same news conference that mayors from the third district had complained about the ongoing recruitment being done by Agbayani, Lakas-CMD cochair.

"For sure, it will lead to disunity in the party if it is not immediately checked," Lambino said.

He appealed to Lakas-CMD national officials to immediately resolve the impasse in the province, which includes the party's anointment of its official gubernatorial bet.

The Lakas-CMD will be choosing between him and Agbayani's wife, Dr. Jamie Eloise Agbayani, who announced on Wednesday her intention to run for governor under the administration party.

Lakas-CMD national officials—President Macapagal-Arroyo, national chair; Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., president; and former president Fidel Ramos, chair emeritus—are from this province.

Lambino said he had no problem about Agbayani's recruitment. But he added that to recruit new members and pit them against incumbents, who have been loyal to the party, was "not correct."

"Why will you recruit new members to fight your old members? *Hindi dapat yon* (That should not be)," Lambino said.

He said these mayors had worked hard for the party. He cited San Carlos City Mayor Julian Resuello, who campaigned hard for Ms Arroyo in his city, which is also the hometown of the late presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

"Where was the governor when we were fighting FPJ? Did he ever make statements endorsing Ms Arroyo? They never made statements endorsing the President," Lambino said.

Two weeks ago, Agbayani swore in as new Lakas-CMD member Deputy Customs Commissioner Gallant Soriano, who announced he was running for congressman in the third district.

With this move, Lambino said Resuello would be put in a disadvantage because, he said, Soriano's brother Douglas, a former San Carlos mayor, also planned to run for mayor.

"If Commissioner Soriano gets the Lakas nomination, which I'm sure they are planning to do, *papaano yong* brother *niya* (how about his brother)? *Hindi naman siya pwedeng tatakbo* (He could not run under the opposition)," Lambino said.

"What will happen now to the old member, *si* Mayor Resuello, the chair of the party in San Carlos? His son is running for mayor and he ran under Lakas when he won as vice mayor," he said.

Arenas also said that her camp would not agree to a "free zone" in the province.

"*Di kami papayag doon. Magkakagulo doon. Kung gusto nilang suportahan namin ang* whole Team Unity, *kailangang hindi ganoon* (We won't agree to that. If they want us to support the whole Team Unity, then that should not happen)," she said.

Gov't effort vs poverty not enough, says Legarda

By Norman Bordadora

ILOILO CITY—IT'S JUST NOT enough and there's a lot to be done for the country's poor folk to feel the economic gains under the Arroyo administration, former Sen. Loren Legarda said here yesterday.

"Economists say you need a seven-percent growth for at least 10 years for people to feel the economic progress," Legarda, opposition senatorial candidate, told reporters.

"So the 5.4 growth rate being touted by the administration isn't really enough to trickle down and be felt by the people," she added.

Vietnam gains

Without refuting the administration's financial experts, particularly Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda, Legarda said that "even Vietnam has exceeded us in terms of growth rate."

"So there is a lot to be done. It's not enough. What we see is the reality (even though) statistics may be good," she said.

Told of Salceda's claims that the economic situation in recent months was much better than that during the time of deposed President Joseph Estrada, Legarda said the country should instead be compared with its neighbors in the region.

"We should compare ourselves with our Asean neighbors who were behind us then. We should not just compete with ourselves but we should compete with our neighbors," Legarda said.

A dollar a day

"The fact is there are four million Filipinos who live on P32 a day, why is it that 60 percent of our population have one dollar per capita income?" she added.

"I am not saying that our economists and economic managers are not doing anything. Of course, they are but there is still a need of better effort and trickle-down effect," Legarda said.

Gloria allies in Cebu also in disarray over local polls

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—IF THE ADMINISTRATION coalition has two allies quarreling in Pampanga, this could also be the situation in Cebu.

After abandoning the Lakas party, the group of Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia officially joined Kampi on Wednesday.

Kampi president Rep. Luis Villafuerte announced that the governor, seeking her second term in the May 14 elections, is now the provincial chair of the party.

It's not that simple.

At the time Garcia and her group took their oath before Villafuerte in Manila, Lakas spokesperson for the Visayas Elberto Emphasis announced that the party had appointed former Cebu fourth district Rep. Celestino Martinez Jr. as party chair in Cebu.

Martinez will be the Lakas candidate for governor in Cebu, Emphasis said.

Then and now, both Garcia and Martinez have remained allies of President-Macapagal Arroyo.

But, as things stand, it will be a return bout for the two GMA allies, who fiercely fought over the gubernatorial post in 2004.

Martinez had lost to Garcia in the first bout but has continued to claim he was cheated.

Lakas and Kampi are part of the administration coalition which formed the Team Unity for the senatorial bets.

But who will be the official candidate of the coalition in Cebu?

Villafuerte said Garcia can benefit from the equity-of-the-incumbent rule of the coalition ticket.

Villafuerte added that Lakas could not put up its own candidate for governor.

Emphasis quickly refuted Villafuerte and said that a candidate from one of the parties within the coalition could still be allowed to run to ensure that he or she would not go to the opposition.

Emphasis belittled Garcia's move to join Kampi, saying Lakas had remained a dominant administration party in Cebu.

Garcia has the edge in resources, Emphasis said, but added that Martinez also has an advantage because the Osmeña brothers—former Cebu governor Emilio "Lito" Osmeña and former Sen. John "Sonny" Osmena—are on his side.

Sonny's son, John Gregory, who ran for governor in 2004, will also be supporting Martinez because John-John will be the Lakas candidate for the first congressional district.

"In 2004, Gwen won by 405,000 votes. Junie (Martinez) got 398,000 votes while John-John got 205,000 votes. You do the math," he said.

ROUNDUP

Access road opens

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Manila North Tollways Corp., builder and concessionaire of the North Luzon Expressway, has repaired a 1.46-km road at no cost to the government, giving also users of the NLEx and local motorists toll-free access to this ecozone. Jose de Jesus, president of the Lopez family-led MNTC, said the road, rehabilitated at a cost of P20 million, would be turned over to the Department of Public Works and Highways today. The road, located past the Dau interchange in Mabalacat, Pampanga, links the NLEx and the Manila North Road (known also as the MacArthur Highway). The repair of the road came after MNTC had rebuilt the 83-km NLEx in February 2005 at a cost of P18 billion.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

84 kg of marijuana seized

BAGUIO CITY—Police seized 84 kilograms of marijuana bricks from a man at a checkpoint in the boundary of Tabuk and Tinglayan towns in Kalinga last week. The bricks, valued at P2.1 million, were seized from Roger Macad, 29, of Barangay Maswa, Tinglayan. Macad was allegedly transporting the bricks, contained in six sacks, when policemen stopped his Ford Fiera and searched it on Feb. 23. Reports said the shipment would be delivered to Wilburt Agyao, 19, of Barangay Agbannawag, Tinglayan. Police later arrested Agyao. In Benguet, policemen and agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency uprooted and burned marijuana plants in 21 plantations in Bakun town on Feb. 10. The marijuana plants were valued at more than P71 million.

Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Vizcaya pols form own party

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Learning from the Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) split in the 2004 elections, several incumbent officials decided to form a local political party to stabilize their organization in preparation for the May 14 elections. Called the Partido Abante Nueva Vizcaya (PANV), the party will face the administration coalition candidates in the province. In 2004, PANV members ran under the LDP faction identified with Sen. Panfilo Lacson but they were faced with a dilemma when Sen. Edgardo Angara, LDP president, questioned before the Supreme Court the legitimacy of Lacson's wing. When the high court issued its decision that recognized Angara's leadership, LDP candidates in the province campaigned as independent candidates and were denied copies of certificates of canvass by the Comelec.

Ben Moses Ebreo, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Bishop 'hands off' on Leyte poll feud

MAASIN CITY—Maasin Bishop Precioso Cantillas is keeping his hands off the quarrel between two political clans in Southern Leyte.

Cantillas said his intervention would be confined to listening to the Lerias and the Mercados.

Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias, who belongs to the Nationalist People's Coalition, and the Mercado brothers, Roger and Damian, of the Lakas-CMD, coalesced in the May 2004 elections.

The coalition, however, appeared breaking up when Lerias and Maasin Mayor Damian Mercado, both on their last terms, failed to agree on who should run for governor.

Jani Arnaiz, Inquirer Visayas

CAVITE BOUND
National Housing Authority general manager Federico Laxa (left) gives a briefing to Vice President Noli de Castro and Rep. Gilbert Remulla on the status of a resettlement project for railway dwellers in Trece Martires City in Cavite.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Pasay standoff spawns new cases

Dismissed officials sue city execs, DILG

By Julie M. Aurelio

OUSTED PASAY CITY VICE MAYOR ANTONINO filed on Wednesday contempt charges against those who prevented him from entering City Hall.

On the other hand, dismissed Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad filed a perjury case against two city councilors who allegedly made "false and malicious accusations" against him in September.

Calixto's complaint named as respondents Mayor Alan Panaligan, chief of police Sr. Supt. Marietto Valerio, City Administrator Santiago Quial and Undersecretary Wencelito Andanar of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Trinidad, meanwhile, filed charges in the Pasay City Prosecutors' Office against Generoso and Ma. Antonio Cuneta, who were suspended, along with him, for an alleged P400 million anomalous garbage collection and disposal contract.

Calixto, who was twice refused entry to City Hall, filed the case in the 10th Division of the Court of Appeals through his lawyer, Phil Ramos. The day before, Panaligan's camp charged Calixto with usurpation of authority and anticipation of duties of public office.

Last week, the Court of Appeals issued a 60-day temporary restraining order (TRO) on Calixto's dismissal. Following the release of the TRO, Calixto tried twice to enter City Hall to retake his post but was prevented fromdoing so by the local police.

Status quo

On Monday, Andanar, in a letter, told Calixto the status quo would remain and Panaligan and his vice mayor, Arvin Tolentino, should stay put. The DILG also asked the CA to clarify the TRO it issued in favor of Calixto.

But Calixto's camp said that by refusing to let the former vice mayor assume his duties, Panaligan was ignoring the court order.

In his complaint, Calixto asked the CA to direct Panaligan, Valerio, Andanar and Quial to explain why they should not be cited in contempt of court.

As the vice mayor sought to return to his office, more than a hundred supporters kept him company at the Office of Senior Citizens' Affairs (Osca) in the Pasay City Sports Complex.

Two tents bearing the names and photos of Calixto and dismissed Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad were set up near the entrance of the Osca. Inside, a marble nameplate that read "Hon. Antonino Calixto, Vice Mayor" was on top of a table.

Powers

Calixto said he had begun exercising some of the powers of an acting mayor like issuing memoranda to department heads and other city officials. Asked if he would attempt to enter City Hall again, Calixto said he was waiting for the smoke to clear.

"I don't want chaos. I don't want to see people get hurt again," Calixto said, adding he was waiting for his counsels' advice on what to do next.

Meanwhile, Andanar said the contempt charge against him would not prosper. "That (the charge) is only sound and fury signifying nothing," Andanar said in a phone interview.

He said he would wait for the clarification on the Feb. 22 TRO from the CA.

The Cunetas, who are husband and wife, filed separate affidavits after their dismissal, alleging that Trinidad received bribes from private hauling companies to extend their contracts with the local government.

Trinidad said the Cunetas' affidavits were half truths meant "to discredit his public service record and credentials."

Trinidad, Calixto and 10 city councilors, including the Cunetas, were charged last year for allegedly approving P232 million-garbage contracts without public bidding.

The Office of the Ombudsman suspended the officials for six months and, in January, dismissed them from government service, except for the Cunetas. The two were granted immunity in exchange for turning state witness against the accused officials.

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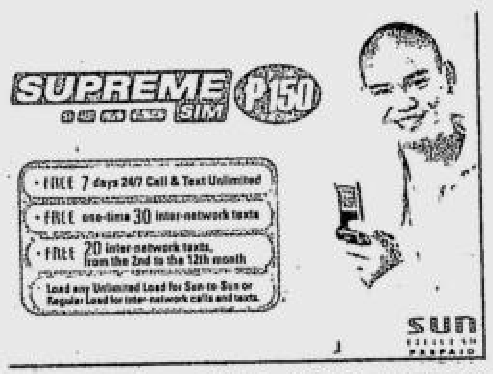
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Manila pols face charges for 2004 violations

By Nikko Dizon

CRIMINAL CHARGES ARE SET to be filed against two Manila politicians for allegedly engaging in premature campaigning in the May 2004 synchronized elections.

Incumbent Rep. Rodolfo Bacani (4th district) and Manuel "Nonong" Bagatsing, who lost in the elections in 2004, are accused of failing to remove their holiday posters and billboards within the prescribed period.

Under the resolution promulgated yesterday by the Comelec en banc, Bacani and Bagatsing would be charged with violating the Omnibus Election Code, the Fair Election Act, and Comelec Resolution No. 6520.

"The billboards and posters assumed a partisan political character when the respondents failed to remove them within the prescribed period because it indirectly promoted the respondents' candidacy," the Comelec said in a six-page resolution.

The failure of Bacani and Bagatsing to "reasonably remove the propaganda materials when mandated to do so clearly establishes the existence of probable cause as to warrant the filing of an information against them," the poll body said.

Bacani and Bagatsing could file a motion for reconsideration, said Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez.

Jimenez said in a press conference the case should warn candidates about what could happen if they continued violating election campaign laws.

He added that private citizens could also file complaints against candidates.

"We take reports from the public seriously because it's the public itself that is offended by this. They are the ones who see these posters on a daily basis," Jimenez said.

A resident of Sampaloc, Manila identified as Rolly de Leon filed the complaint against Bacani and Bagatsing in February 2004.

Beyond deadline

De Leon alleged posters and billboards bearing the names of Bacani and Bagatsing and their holiday greetings were still posted even after the holiday season and beyond the Jan. 18, 2004 deadline given by the Comelec for the removal of such materials.

By then, Bacani and Bagatsing, who were vying for the same congressional seat, had filed their certificates of candidacies.

Bacani and Bagatsing argued the billboards did not solicit votes, and thus were not election propaganda.

They also claimed they were not responsible for putting up the posters and billboards.

An election officer who first conducted the investigation dismissed De Leon's petition but the decision was reversed by the commission en banc.

The commissioners said Bacani and Bagatsing violated Comelec Resolution No. 6520 which stated that all propaganda materials of a person should be removed once he became a candidate, otherwise he would be presumed to have conducted premature campaigning.

It is the failure to remove the billboards and posters which is considered a violation of the Comelec resolution and the Omnibus Election Code, the Comelec said.

Penalties

Bacani and Bagatsing could face one to six years imprisonment and/or perpetual disqualification from holding public office and/or deprivation of the right to vote if found guilty of violating the election laws, Jimenez said.

Jimenez added that despite the en banc resolution, Bacani and Bagatsing could still file their certificates of candidacies for this year's elections.

Brillante willing to turn himself in; seeks reduced bail

By DJ Yap

FORMER MAKATI VICE MAYOR Roberto Brillante, the subject of an arrest warrant from a Makati court, said he was ready to turn himself in.

But first he would ask Judge Selma Palacio Alaras of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 62 to reduce the recommended P12,000 bail for his provisional release.

Brillante also said he would ask his lawyer to file a petition for review in the Department of Justice and question the finding of probable cause in the libel case.

The arrest warrant was issued against Brillante after he was charged with libel by his political rival Mayor Jejomar Binay whom he earlier accused of graft.

Brillante said the bail recommended by assistant city prosecutor Edgardo Hirang was "highly exorbitant." He said "under the law, bail bond for libel should only be P2,000."

Brillante said something was "fishy" about the haste with which the arrest warrant was issued, as well as the finding of probable cause in the P10 million libel suit against him.

"I was shocked when I heard a warrant was issued. I didn't even realize the preliminary investigation was over. The last hearing was just two weeks ago," Brillante said.

"It's politically motivated and intended to harass me as the number one critic of Mayor Binay ..." he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

On Monday, Alaras issued an arrest warrant against Brillante after the Makati prosecutor found probable cause to indict him for allegedly making defamatory remarks against Binay at a press conference last year.

Makati police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz said he had not received a copy of the arrest warrant, which Alaras' court staff said was mailed early this week.

Cruz said Brillante would be treated like any person with an arrest warrant.

Brillante added he had also withdrawn from the vice mayoralty race in Makati City. Earlier, he announced his intention to be the running mate of Sen. Lito Lapid, reportedly Malacañang's bet for Makati City mayor.

Brillante said he did not think Lapid was "serious" in trying to win as mayor of Makati. As for his own plans, he said: "I'll just continue pursuing the graft and corruption cases against Binay."

DID YOU KNOW

ON FEB. 23, 1998, then President Fidel V. Ramos signed Republic Act No. 8535, which sought to establish Novaliches as a city separate from Quezon City. The proposed city would include Greater Lagro, North Fairview (excluding the La Mesa Dam Watershed), and 13 other barangays. But a plebiscite on Oct. 23, 1999 rejected Novaliches' bid for cityhood. The Yes votes totaled almost 47,000, while the No votes totaled almost 144,000.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Boratong case judge refuses to inhibit himself

By Santiago R. Alcantara

THE JUDGE HEARING THE CASE against alleged shabu market operator Amin Imam Boratong denied yesterday a motion of the defense to inhibit himself from hearing the case.

Judge Abraham Borreta of the Pasig Regional Court Branch 154 said he was acting with neutrality, although defense lawyer Raymond Fortun saw things differently.

"I act fairly and without partiality. I have displayed the code of neutrality of a judge. My conduct was consistent with the code of judicial conduct," Borreta said, adding that he intended to uphold his oath of office.

In his motion on Feb. 1, Fortun said "the Honorable Judge tried to proceed to trial despite the absence of his counsel of record."

On Feb. 8, the judge, Fortun said, "overruled the pleas of the undersigned counsel for a deferment of the hearing for one week due to possible risks to his (counsel's) health if the trial would proceed".

Fortun added that on Feb. 15, Borreta "tried to proceed with the trial despite the absence of the accused (who was in detention)."

On Feb 22, the lawyer said Borretta "did a Pontius Pilate by refusing to render assistance to process server of Branch 21, RTC Cagayan de Oro City so she could enforce the order" to bring prosecution witness Samer Palao to the court for arraignment on Feb. 28.

The hearing was subsequently cancelled when Palao did not show up. The prosecution tried to present a new witness, an arresting officer, but Borreta said Palao had to finish his testimony first before a new witness could be introduced.

Palao's nonappearance was caused by miscommunication about security arrangements, the prosecution said. The witness is in the custody of the Philippine National Police, although the National Bureau of Investigation wanted to put him under their care.

In the last hearing, the judge denied the motion to transfer Boratong and his co-accused, Shieryl Molera, from the custody of the NBI to the PNP for lack of substance.

METROBRIEFS

Bumpy stretch

THE ENTIRE stretch of the Cubao underpass along Edsa will be closed to traffic at 10 p.m. today to give way to work on the asphalt overlay of the roadway, the Metro Manila Development Authority said yesterday. On Saturday morning, both the northbound and southbound lanes of the underpass will be reopened to traffic, said MMDA assistant general manager for planning Cora Cruz. But motorists should expect a less than smooth ride, as the road would have been scraped by that time in preparation for the asphalt overlay to resume at 8 p.m. on the same day. Road repair work will be over by Sunday.

DJ Yap

School hit by fire

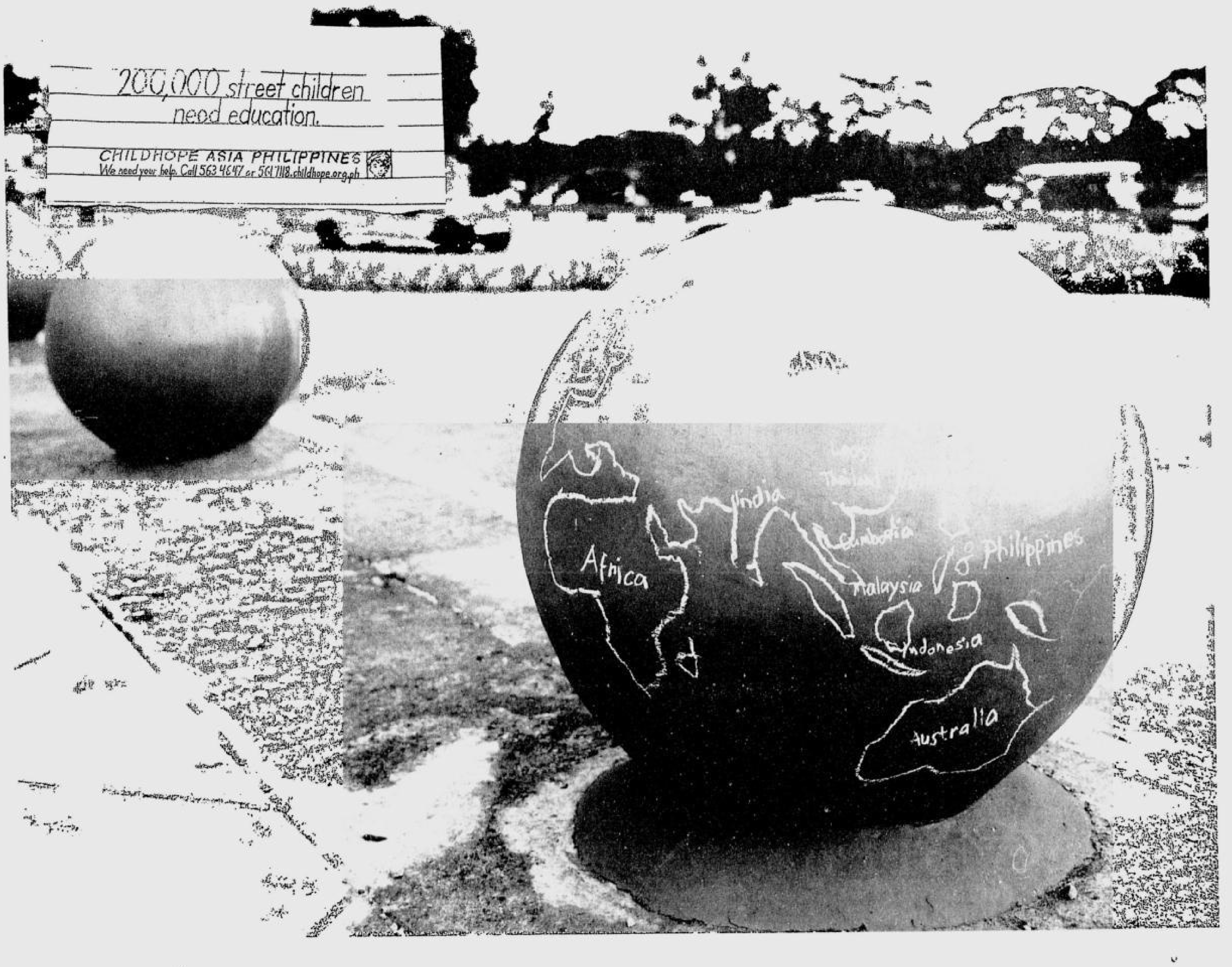
A PRIVATE school in Tondo, Manila was partly destroyed when a one-hour fire hit the structure Wednesday night. While nobody was hurt in the incident, the fire, which started around 10 p.m. destroyed eight classrooms and and laboratory equipment at the Holy Child Catholic School on P.Herrera and Ilaya Streets in Tondo. Damage to property was initially placed at P1 million, said Supt. Pablito Cordeta, city fire marshal. Ironically, the fire took place on the eve of the first day of March, Fire Prevention Month.

Tina G. Santos

Mum's the word

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation medico-legal team that conducted a health examination on former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste has kept mum on their initial findings. Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Elmo Alameda had ordered the NBI to determine Leviste's state of health after Department of Justice prosecutors led by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco objected to Leviste's "extended" hospital stay. They suspect that Leviste, who is confined at the Makati Medical Center, was faking an illness to avoid detention at the Makati City Jail. Leviste has been charged with murder after he admitted killing his longtime aide, Rafael de las Alas. Earlier findings showed Leviste to be suffering from fluctuating blood pressure, but the court ordered the NBI to conduct a reexamination.

Allison W. Lopez



Iran, Syria to meet with US, UK on Iraq crisis

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—PRIME MINister Nuri al-Maliki's office announced Wednesday that the regional security conference on the Iraqi crisis will be held here March 10, and a top diplomat said Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria, have agreed to attend along with the US and Britain.

An announcement by the prime minister's media office said invitations had been sent to neighboring countries, Egypt, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The statement did not mention acceptances.

But Deputy Foreign Minister Labid Abawi told The Associated Press that Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia had accepted, along with the US and Britain. Russia and France were studying the invitation, but "I don't see any sign they will refuse," he said.

"Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, even the US and Britain have informed us they will participate," he said, although Tehran has said publicly it has made no decision. Abawi also said China had agreed to attend.

Abawi said the date would be set within two days. The statement from the prime minister was issued later Wednesday.

Al-Maliki's adviser, Sami al-Askari, also said neighboring countries had agreed to come. Iran has publicly said it is studying the invitation.

"The conference will be important. It will prove that Iraq is politically capable of holding such a conference. It will send a message to the world," Abawi said.

Al-Askari said it would allow countries such as the US, Iran and Syria "to sit down together without paying a political price."

Washington's willingness to attend the conference marked a diplomatic turnabout after months of refusing dialogue with Tehran over calming the situation in Iraq.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Tuesday that the United States would join the meeting and that Washington supported the Iraqi government's invitation to Iran and Syria.

The Bush administration waited to embrace the idea until Iraq had made progress on a law governing national distribution of oil revenue.

"We did work with them on the precise timing of the announcement," said State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack.

The failure of Iraq's parliament to pass the oil law has been an irritant in US-Iraqi relations. The difficulty is symbolic of Iraq's regional, factional and political divisions, and passage is seen by the United States as a key marker of the government's will and ability to work across those divides.

"We work with them to encourage them to meet those benchmarks that they themselves have set," McCormack said. "This is something that they have been talking about for quite some time, and they thought the timing was right for them to hold the conference and so we encouraged them to move forward with it."

Ali Larijani, the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said earlier that Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari contacted Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki to discuss the conference. "We are reviewing the proposal," Larijani said, quoted by the state TV web site. *AP*

Jefferson may have Jewish lineage

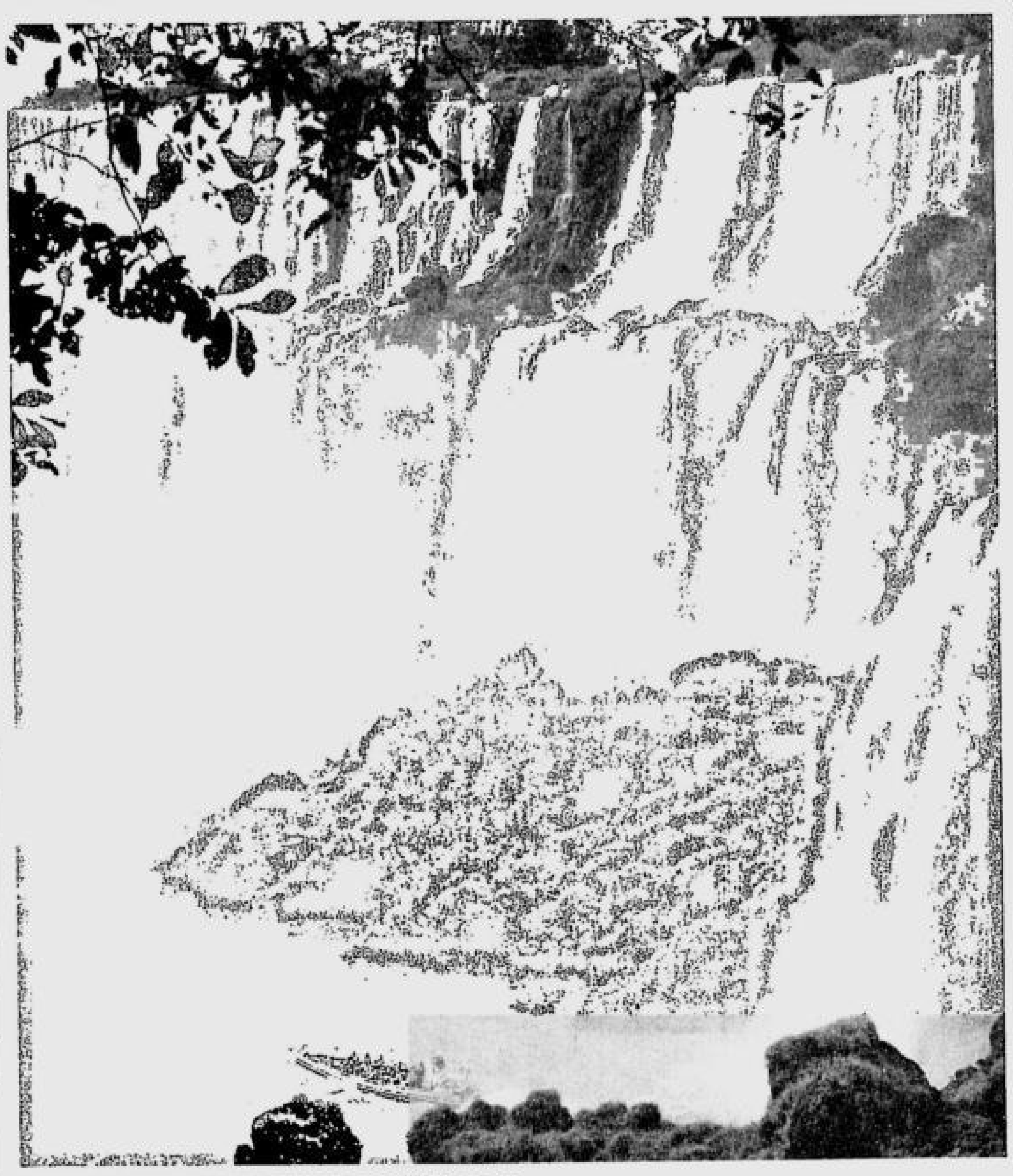
RESEARCHERS STUDYING Thomas Jefferson's Y chromosome have found it belongs to a lineage that is rare in Europe but common in the Middle East, raising the possibility that the third president of the United States had a Jewish ancestor many generations ago.

No biological samples of Jefferson remain, but his Y chromosome, the genetic element that determines maleness, is assumed to be the same as that carried by living descendants of Field Jefferson, his paternal uncle. These relatives donated cells for an inquiry into whether Jefferson had fathered a hidden family with his slave Sally Hemings, a possibility that most historians had scoffed at.

But researchers reported in 1998 that the Jefferson family chromosome matched perfectly that of a male line descendant of Eston Hemings, one of Sally Hemings' sons. The genetic evidence was not conclusive by itself but made a strong case combined with the historical evidence that Hemings had indeed become Jefferson's mistress after the death of his wife, Martha.

Geneticists at the University of Leicester in England, led by Turi E. King and Mark A. Jobling, have now undertaken a survey of the branch or lineage to which Jefferson's Y chromosome belongs.

New York Times News Service



ONLY A TRICKLE SEVEN MONTHS AGO

A boat carrying tourists passes in front of the part of the Iguazu Falls known as the San Martin Falls, on the Argentine side of the Iguazu River, which lies on the border between Argentina and Brazil, Feb. 26. The falls had dried to a trickle seven months ago, after the worst drought in two decades. REUTERS

Court allows Smith burial in Bahamas

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA—A Florida appeals court helped clear the way for Anna Nicole Smith to be buried in the Bahamas, saying evidence supports that it is what the former Playboy Playmate wanted.

The 4th District Court of Appeal concluded Wednesday that Smith's "last ascertainable wish" was to be buried alongside her son. "This finding is not essentially disputed," the appellate judges said.

Lawyer Richard Milstein, the advocate for Smith's 5-month-old daughter, Dannielynn, said in a statement Wednesday after the ruling that the funeral was set for Friday.

He declined to comment further, saying he wanted to "uphold the decorum and dignity that should be maintained throughout this process, for the sake of Dannielynn and the memories she will have of her mother's funeral."

The starlet's estranged mother, Virgie Arthur, challenged last week's ruling by Judge Larry Seidlin, who gave control of the body to Milstein. Arthur wanted to bury Smith in her native Texas.

But Smith's boyfriend, Howard K. Stern, had argued that Smith had wanted to be buried in the Bahamas next to her 20-year-old son, who died last year of apparent drug-related causes.

Smith's body has been stored at a medical examiner's office since shortly after she died Feb. 8 at the age of 39. A cause of death has not been determined. *AP*

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. US historian, dies at 89

SCHLESINGER Jr., in a 1946 photo. AP

NEW YORK—ARTHUR M. Schlesinger Jr., the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and Kennedy insider who helped define mainstream liberalism during the Cold War and remained an eminent public thinker into the 21st century, has died, his son said. He was 89.

Schlesinger suffered a heart attack while dining out with family members Wednesday night in Manhattan, Stephen Schlesinger said. He was taken to New York Downtown Hospital, where he died.

Among the most famous historians of his time, Schlesinger was widely respected as learned and readable, with a panoramic vision of American culture and politics. He received a National Book Award for "Robert Kennedy and His Times" and both a National Book Award and a Pulitzer for "A Thousand Days," his memoir/chronicle of President John F. Kennedy's administration. He also won a Pulitzer, in 1946, for "The Age of Jackson," his landmark chronicle of Andrew Jackson's administration.

With his bow ties and horn-rimmed glasses, Schlesinger seemed the very image of a reserved, tweedy scholar. But he was an assured member of the so-called Eastern elite.

He was a longtime confidant of the Kennedys, a fellow Harvard man who served in President Kennedy's administration and was often criticized for idealizing the family, especially for not mentioning the president's extramarital affairs.

"At no point in my experience did his preoccupation with women—apart from (his daughter) Caroline crawling around the Oval Office—interfere with his conduct of the public business," Schlesinger later wrote.

Liberalism declined in his lifetime to the point where politicians feared using the word, but Schlesinger's opinions remained liberal, and influential, whether old ones on the "imperial presidency," or newer ones on the Iraq war. For both historians and Democratic officials, he was a kind of professor emeritus, valued for his professional knowledge and for his personal past.

A native of Columbus, Ohio, and the son of a prominent historian, he was born Arthur Bancroft Schlesinger Jr., but later gave himself his father's middle name, Meier. Family friends included James Thurber, historian Charles A. Beard and future Supreme Court justice Felix Frankfurter.

During World War II, Schlesinger drafted some statements for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and served as an intelligence analyst for the Office of Strategic Services, a forerunner to the CIA.

Schlesinger emerged as a historian with "The Age of Jackson." Published in 1945, when he was just 27, the book offered a new, class-based interpretation of President Andrew Jackson's administration, destroying the old myth that the country was once an egalitarian paradise.

"The Age of Jackson" remained a major text despite eventual criticism—even by Schlesinger—for overlooking Jackson's appeasement of slavery and his harsh treatment of Indians. *AP*

Spanish flu victim may help fight bird flu

LONDON—SCIENTISTS WANT to exhume the body of a British diplomat who died of "Spanish flu" during a pandemic in 1919 in hopes of discovering clues to fight a possible future global outbreak sparked by H5N1 bird flu.

Sir Mark Sykes, best known for his work dismantling the Ottoman Empire, is believed to be buried in a lead-lined coffin, something which may have preserved enough human tissue to yield useful information on how he died, and the nature of the avian flu that killed him.

"We're after an intact body," said John Oxford, a professor of virology at Queen Mary's College, who has asked for permission to obtain the corpse. "Sometimes people who have been buried in lead are very well preserved. If we obtain that (the body), then we can ask a lot of important questions about the way that Sir Mark died."

Understanding more about the Spanish flu might help scientists design better treatments for H5N1. Victims of the Spanish flu frequently experienced an overly aggressive immune response, which began to attack their own bodies. The same phenomenon has been seen in human H5N1 cases.

"The first thing we'll be looking at is the pathology of the lung—whether he was overwhelmed by his own immune response," Oxford said.

Spanish flu victims have been studied before—including Innuit bodies recovered from the Arctic permafrost and corpses of World War I soldiers. Experts estimate the Spanish flu killed more than 40 million people worldwide. *AP*

WOULD-BE BONNIES

Two female bank robbery suspects, described as between 16 to 24 years old, are caught in a bank surveillance photo. The two are suspected of robbing a grocery store bank in Acworth, Ga. Feb. 27. AP

In Australia, sex workers as happy as other women

SYDNEY—PROSTITUTES WORKING legally in Australian brothels are just as happy as women with regular day jobs, a survey showed Thursday.

But women who sell sex illegally in their homes or on the streets are far less happy, according to the survey by Queensland University of Technology researcher Charlotte Seib.

The study compared the mental and physical health of nearly 250 prostitutes, aged 18 to 57.

Legal workers reported similar job satisfaction to women in the general community, the national AAP news agency quoted the survey as showing.

"The general picture is that those women whose families know about their work reported greater job satisfaction than those who kept their work secret," said Seib.

Eighty-two percent of the women said they took up prostitution for the money, while 52 percent pointed to the flexible working hours.

"And 39 percent said they had a particular goal in mind such as a new car, a house or a holiday," said Seib.

One in four of the women surveyed had a university degree, contrary to the stereotype that sex workers came from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. *AFP*

Close up account of US soldier who raped, murdered in Iraq

By Andrea Hopkins

FT. CAMPBELL, KY—THE CRIME captured world headlines, but the courtroom was tiny. I could have reached out and touched the US soldier who raped a 14-year-old Iraqi girl and helped murder her and her family.

Everyone in the room could hear him sniffle when he cried.

He did not weep loudly, but there were only about two dozen of us in the tiny room and the confession of Sgt. Paul Cortez, 24, was so raw and graphic that his strangled intake of breath was often the only sound in the windowless space.

I have been a Reuters reporter for 12 years but I rarely write about crime, and the court-martial on this military base in rural Kentucky was nothing like the trials I've seen on television.

The four lawyers said little. A military judge in black robes asked the questions and Cortez, in a dress green uniform and the black boots of the 101st Airborne Division, spoke not from a witness stand but seated by his lawyers.

His voice broke as he recalled how he pulled up the girl's skirt while another soldier pinned her to the floor.

Cortez lowered his eyes as the judge asked painstaking questions about how much the five accused soldiers had had to drink—six small bottles of Iraqi whiskey and two of gin, mixed with an energy drink called Rip It—and how long Cortez spent raping Abeer Qassim al-Janabi on the afternoon of March 12, 2006.

"About a minute, sir," Cortez replied. A box of tissues and tube of lip balm sat in front of him on the defense table.

No friends or relatives of the victims had traveled from Iraq to sob or shout in their grief, there was no jury to murmur in shock, and there were only four reporters in the room to record the details of a crime that had occurred half a world away in a war zone.

We reporters were accompanied by a military escort at all times and forbidden to talk to the lawyers, judge, witnesses or the accused, who wandered in and out of the courtroom with the rest of us during breaks.

The courthouse stood off by itself on a patch of red Kentucky mud far from the fields where troops trained and prepared for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, too distant even to shout a question had I been so inclined.

Outside the gates, the town of Oak Grove proclaimed its patriotism and support for the troops at every turn. Eagles and American flags lined the strip of pawn shops and liquor stores near the base, and signs welcomed troops home or wished them well in their wars.

The court-martial made the front page of the local newspaper, along with news that five local soldiers had been killed in Afghanistan. While journalists were not the cause of the bad news, I have never felt so unwelcome in a community. The appearance of my notebook and pen stopped conversation in Mugsy's coffee shop just outside the base.

"I don't really follow the news," the woman behind the counter said as she prepared the shop's signature drink for a soldier of the 101st Airborne. *Reuters*

US, N. Korea set talks on normalizing relations

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES WILL BEGIN landmark talks Monday on normalizing relations with North Korea, a regime once branded as part of an "axis of evil" by US President George W. Bush.

In a sign of rapidly easing tensions just two weeks after the secretive Stalinist regime agreed to freeze its nuclear program, US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said he would meet for the talks Monday and Tuesday in New York with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-Gwan.

Under the Feb. 13 deal, North Korea said it would shut down its main nuclear facility and begin steps towards giving up its nuclear weapons program in exchange for some 300 million dollars in aid and moves towards "full diplomatic relations" with the US.

"We will begin the process of addressing our bilateral ties, with the intention of eventual normalization," Hill told a congressional panel about the upcoming talks.

"I want to emphasize the word begin—we have a lot of bilateral issues to talk about," he said.

The State Department said next week's meetings would deal mainly with organizational matters and that the main focus remained on pursuing six-nation negotiations to achieve the full dismantling of North Korea's nuclear program and arsenal.

"Don't look at it as a meeting that's going to produce immediate results," department spokesperson Sean McCormack said. "There's a lot of work to do." Under the multi-phase Feb. 13 agreement worked out in talks involving China, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the United States, North Korea had 60 days to shut down its Yongbyon nuclear facility, invite back international nuclear inspectors and declare all its nuclear programs.

The US and its partners agreed in return to provide North Korea with a first aid installment of 50,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, while Washington committed to launching a "working group" on bilateral ties within 30 days. *AFP*

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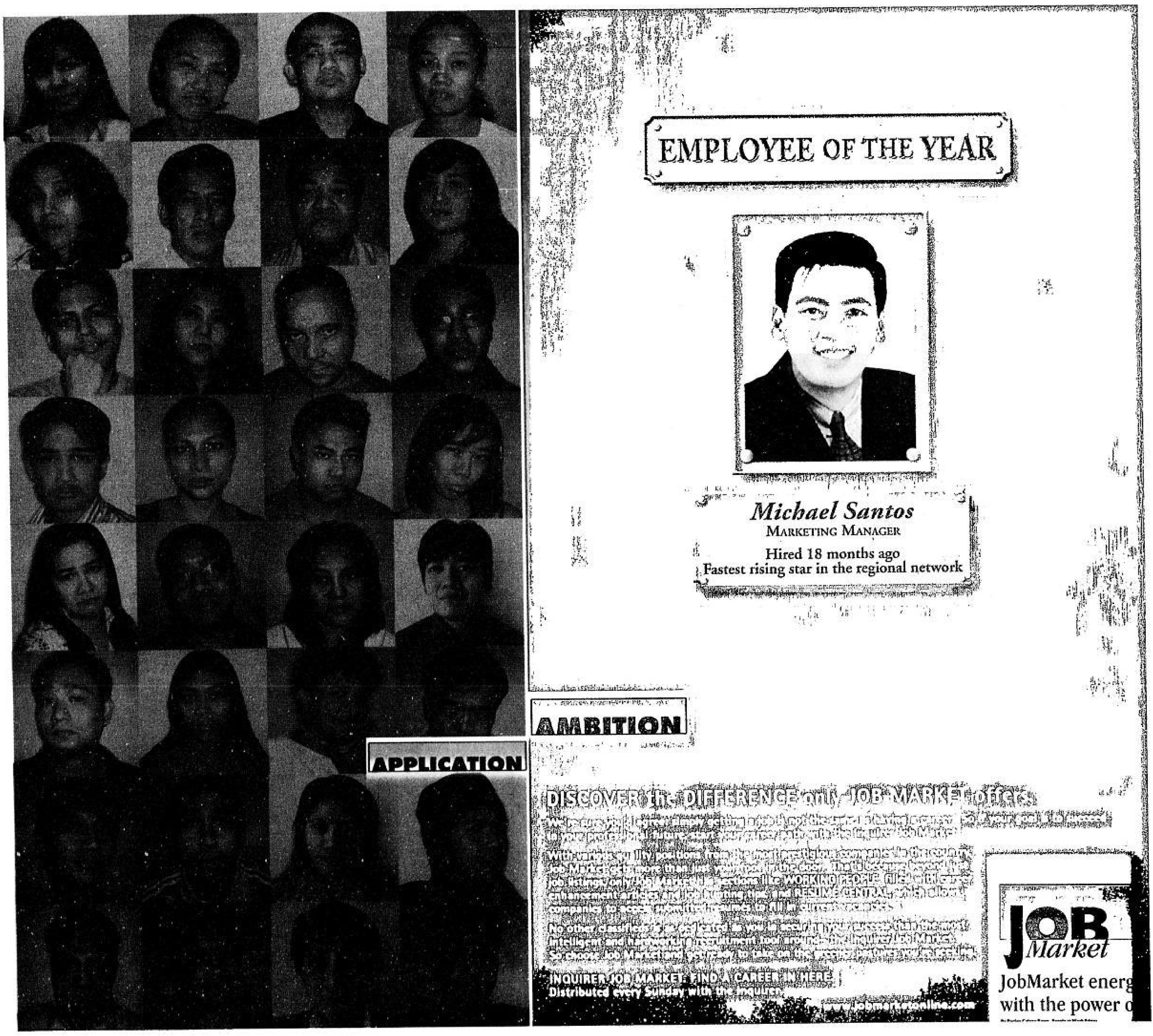
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Well-funded RP five starts bonding in US

By Musong R. Castillo

A HIGH-PROFILE TRAINING for a high-profile national basketball squad.

With three of its mainstays already in the United States, the all-star, all-pro Philippine team under coach Chot Reyes will start its buildup in a Los Angeles training camp next week.

Reyes announced the change in the schedule yesterday, hours before he was to justify before the special budget committee of the RP team the proposed P40 million training and incentives budget of the squad bidding to crash the 2008 Beijing Olympics through the Seaba championship in May and the Fiba-Asia in July.

The committee is made up of PBA chair Ricky Vargas, commissioner Noli Eala, Red Bull's Tony Chua and San Miguel Corp. executive Robert Non.

"We still have to do the administrative work, clean house first, before we start training," Reyes told the INQUIRER over the phone yesterday.

The actual expense could run up to P70 million, counting the salaries that the players will receive, which is the equivalent of the rates they are getting from their mother clubs in the PBA.

REYES: US camp will run players to ground

The bulk of the P40 million that is being sought for approval will be spent mostly on travel expenses. The team is expected to leave soon.

With Barangay Ginebra stalwarts Mark Caguioa, Jay-Jay Helterbrand and Rudy Hatfield already in the US to be with their families, Reyes felt it best to start the US sojourn ahead of time and rendezvous with the three players there.

Reyes will enter the team in the same training camp in Los Angeles where the Talk 'N Text team enrolls during PBA off-seasons and which has some top NBA stars as clients.

The US camp, he said, can jumpstart training, as all 12 of his players will be placed in a rigid skills and conditioning camp to get them in perfect game shape in as little as two weeks' time.

"That camp will run players to the ground," Reyes said. "It will be a working trip for each and

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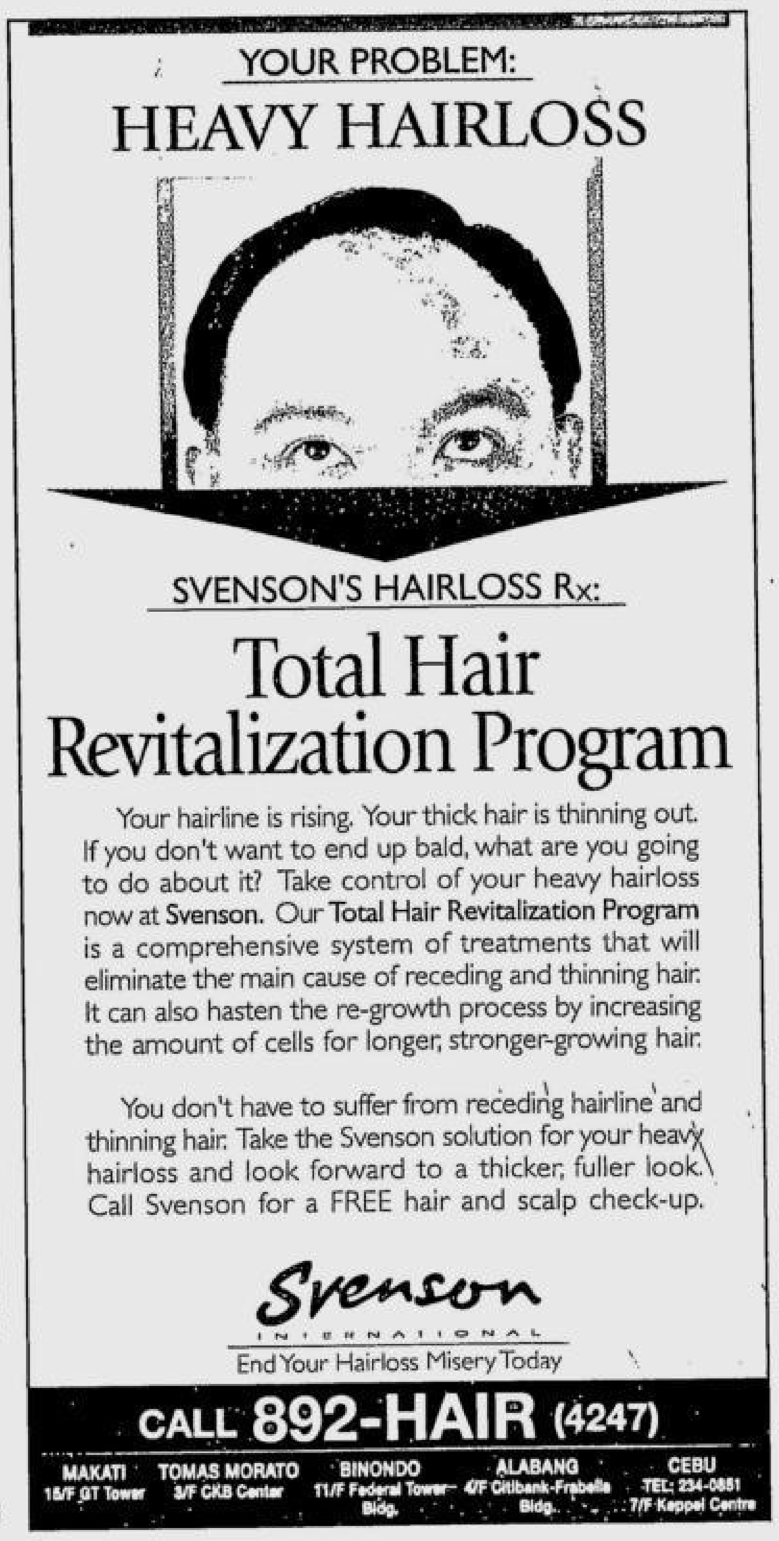
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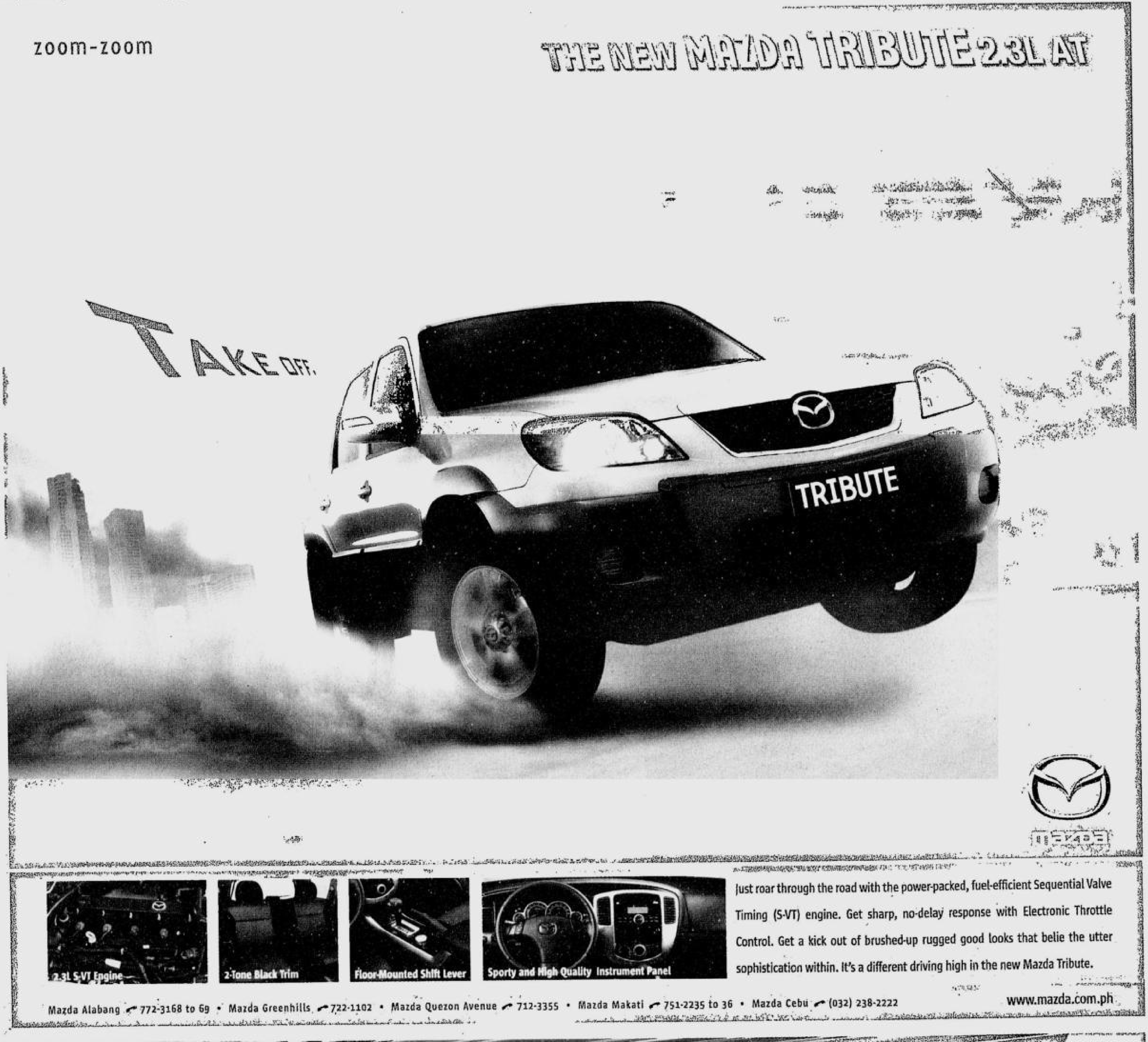
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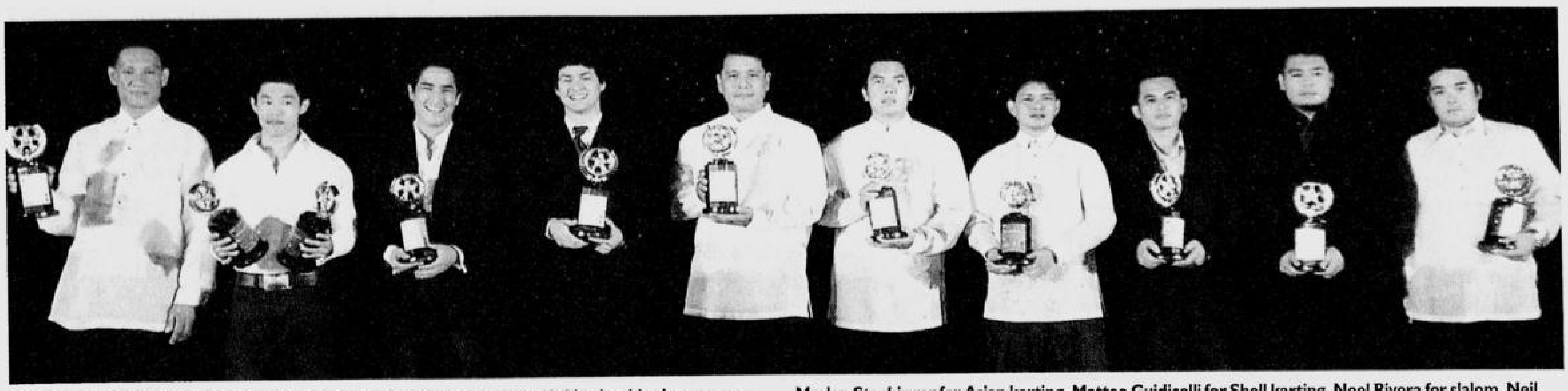


BEST AND BRIGHTEST IN RP MOTORSPORTS: Tyson Sy (second from left) takes his place among the finest drivers for 2006 after his selection as top Filipino motorsports awardee Wednesday night at the Pagcor Theater-Airport Casino Filipino. Sy won the Golden Wheel Award International Driver of the Year. Joining him were (from left) fellow Golden Wheel awardees Glenn Aguilar for motocross, Marlon Stockinger for Asian karting, Matteo Guidicelli for Shell karting, Noel Rivera for slalom, Neil Andaya for 4x4 off-road racing, Jolet Jao for road racing, Jaime Barcial for underbone racing, Dave Jota for drag racing and Alex Perex for drifting. Also honored was Jody Coseteng who received the Golden Wheel National Driver of the Year award. INQUIRER PHOTO / JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Compton signs 1-conference deal as import

By Musong R. Castillo

FROM CALLING THE SHOTS TO MAKING them.

Erstwhile assistant coach Alex Compton yesterday inked a one-conference contract with Welcoat to beef up the young Dragons' backcourt and hopefully make them more competitive in the PBA Fiesta Cup that opens on Sunday.

The 5-foot-11 guard, a full-blooded American who was born in the Philippines, finally got his wish to play in the PBA, as a second import for the league newcomer which finished dead-last in the Philippine Cup.

And with the powerhouse sides lending their cores to the National team, Welcoat is looking forward to a far better performance in the coming tournament.

Charles Clark will reinforce the Dragons, who won just three games in the Philippine Cup but owned victories over heavyweights San Miguel Beer and Talk 'N Text.

Compton, who had knocked on the PBA doors even when he was the premier point guard in the defunct MBA and later on in the PBL, is admittedly just 80 percent game-shape.

"He's still deadly (from the outside) and is still very quick," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio, whose Tender Juicy Giants nipped the Dragons by a point during a tune-up game Wednesday.

The 32-year-old Compton signed a contract that runs up to the end of this tournament, which would pay him close to P300,000 a month. Ordinarily, homegrown rookies receive a maximum of P150,000 in their first season.

GAMES SUNDAY
(*Cuneta Astrodome*)
4:05 p.m.—Welcoat vs. Coca-Cola
6:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Red Bull

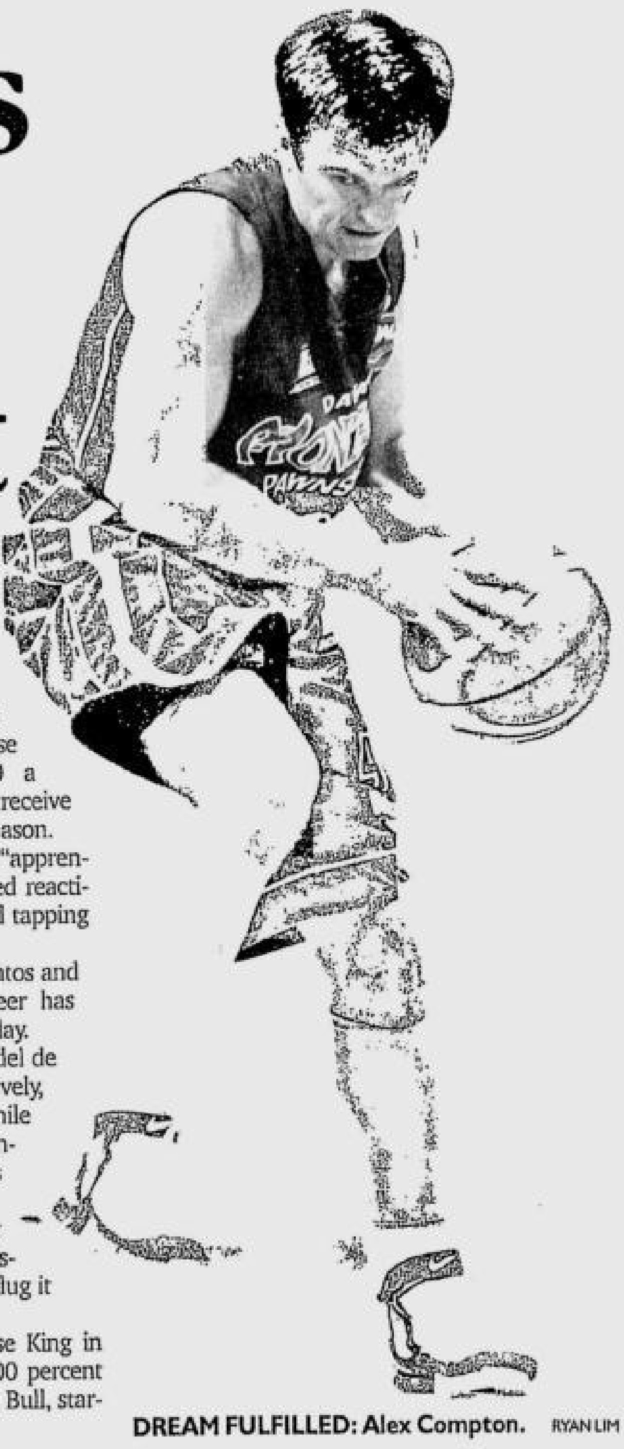
Meanwhile, with the controversial "apprentice" draft scrapped, teams have started reactivating players from the injured list and tapping old faces from the free agent market.

Ginebra has reactivated Rodney Santos and Egay Echavez, while San Miguel Beer has tapped Kiko Adriano and Brandon Cablay.

Air21 and Alaska, after losing Ranidel de Ocampo and Tony dela Cruz, respectively, have yet to augment their rosters, while Talk 'N Text, which lent Asi Taulava, Jimmy Alapag and Ren-Ren Ritualo, has yet to make a move.

Compton plunges into action right on opening day at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay, when the Dragons slug it out with Coca-Cola at 4:05 p.m.

Purefoods, which will suit up Jesse King in case Marquin Chandler is still not 100 percent healthy, and defending champion Red Bull, starring James Penny, tangle at 6:35 p.m.



DREAM FULFILLED: Alex Compton. RYAN LIM

Hot Que fires 69, Miñoza 75 in JW

PHUKET, THAILAND—AUSTRALian Brad Kennedy charged into the first round lead in the star-studded Johnnie Walker Classic after shooting a flawless seven-under-par 65 on Thursday.

The Asian Tour regular sank seven birdies at the 7,189-yard Blue Canyon Country Club and leads by one stroke from former US Masters champion Mike Weir of Canada and England's Graeme Storm.

South African star Ernie Els, chasing a record third victory in the tournament, endured a rollercoaster day, shooting six birdies, three bogeys and two double bogeys en route to a 73.

In contrast, former winner Retief Goosen, the world's number eight, enjoyed a solid start with a 68 to lie three off the early pace in the $2.44 million event, tri-sanctioned by the Asian Tour, European Tour and PGA Tour of Australasia.

Angelo Que and Frankie Miñoza, the only Filipinos in the select field, had contrasting fortunes.

Que, who won his last start back home in the Razon Cup in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, shot a 69 behind a strong performance on the back nine where he gunned down three birdies.

Miñoza, the Philippine Open champion and current UBS Order of Merit leader, soared to a 75 as he struggled on the front nine with a double bogey and two bogeys. At 10 shots down, he needs a sizzling round today to make it to the weekend play.

After missing the cut in his last two tournaments, Kennedy returned home to put in the hours at the practice range with his coach Ian Triggs and was delighted to upstage the big guns in idyllic Phuket.

"I had a great start, chipping in on the first for birdie and hit a great 4-iron to two feet on the second," said Kennedy.

The left-handed Weir, making his debut in the Johnnie Walker Classic, has adapted quickly to the heat of Phuket.

An eagle three on the par five 11th, set up after he pulled off his "best shot of the day" with a rescue club from 230 yards that landed eight feet of the day, was Weir's highlight of the day.

Mighty Women's Cup caging opens Sunday

VETERAN FEMALE CAGE STARS will see action in the 2007 Mighty Women's Cup on Sunday at the RTU gym in Mandaluyong City.

Twenty teams will be slugging it out in the tournament that gathers the former star players of several collegiate leagues, including the UAAP and the NCAA.

Teams will be divided into three groups with three-time champion Demikk-A of coach Haydee Ong topbilling Division A.

Former UAAP titlist University of Santo Tomas of coach Elizabeth Tan, Fifth Avenue Telecom, Milo Best, University of the Philippines and Far Eastern University complete the Division A cast.

Urban, Centro Escolar University, Philippine College of Criminology, Pacific Supertex, Demikk-B and Atleta will mix it up in Group B.

Lynx, last conference's runner-up, remains a favorite in Division C, which includes Mobil-ICA, Parañaque, Philippine Women's University, Diliman Jam, Cavite State University, University of Asia and the Pacific and Trinity.

Games will be played on weekends from 1 to 7 p.m.

League commissioner Nilo C. Fernandez said that Mighty Filter, through general manager Gregory Lim, Apo Floors and Molten are supporting the tournament that aims to uplift the standard of women's basketball in the country.

The Mighty Women's Cup, the first conference of the MBT Championship, is the only league in the country that caters to women's corporate tournaments. *J.W. Payo*

Well-funded . . .

From page A21

everyone of us in there. There will be no rest."

The LA camp, he said, will run for 14 straight days with the players leaving their hotel rooms at 7:30 in the morning for three practice sessions. The long day ends about 8 p.m.

Stints in tough invitational tournaments in Europe, Qatar, Australia and Manila are also lined up for the RP team before they see action in the Fiba-Asia tournament, the qualifier for the Beijing Olympics, in Tokoshima, Japan.

The immediate target for the RP team is to finish at least second in the Seaba tournament in May to qualify for the Fiba-Asia, where the top two teams, except defending champion China, gain slots to the 2008 Olympics. As host, China gains an automatic Olympic spot.

Basketball TV to air NBC rite

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE YOUNG HISTOry of the National Basketball Conference (NBC), its festive opening on March 10 at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City will be televised live on Basketball TV.

The league's two newcomers—MP-Gensan Pacman of Manny Pacquiao and Gov. Willie Enverga's Villa Anita-Quezon—will clash in the main game after the runners-up in the last two conferences, Tagaytay Spring Cooking Oil co-owned by NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and EVP Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino, face Mayor Sammy Co's Pagadian Explorers in the opener.

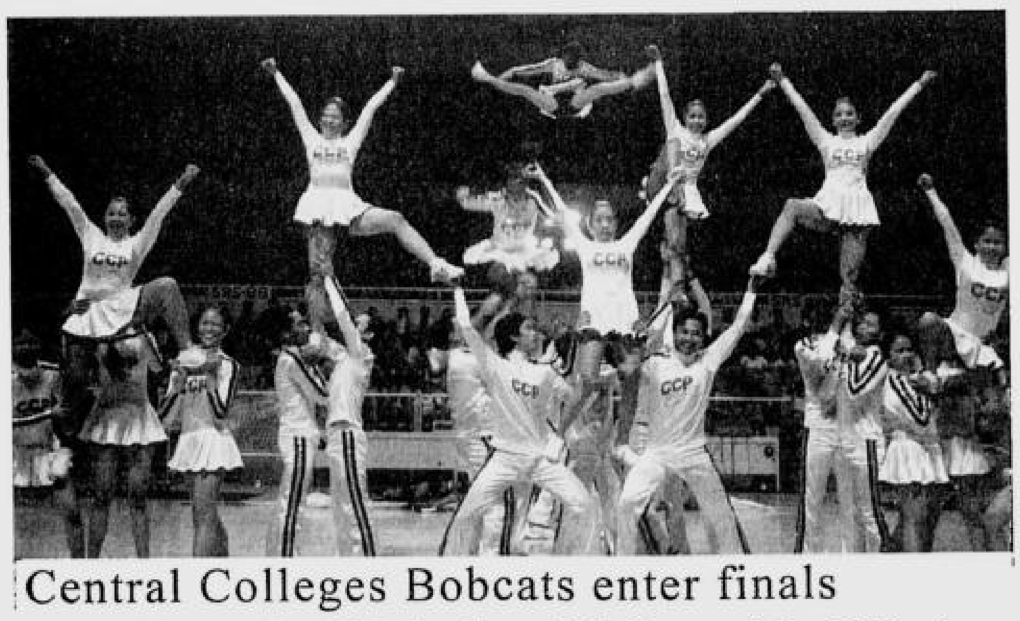
"Our people are excited," said Enverga. "You will see and feel not only our love for basketball but our province's hospitality as well."

"This is an unprecedented move and a great start for NBC's season 4," said Padilla.

Padilla and Tolentino stressed that this is the result of NBC's tieup with Basketball TV. "We're hoping to lure more fans and see more exciting games," they said.

Basketball TV marketing manager Rely San Agustin announced the live coverage starting at 1:30 p.m. in a meeting with the NBC Board.

Nine teams, including Toyota-Iloilo Warriors, Montana Pawnshop-Davao, Valencia Golden Harvest and Iligan Crusaders, will compete in a double-round classification phase that will end in August. The winner will be called the NBC first conference national champion.



Central Colleges Bobcats enter finals

On February 17, 2007 the Central Colleges of the Philippines Bobcats cheerleading team came in second at the elimination round of the 2007 National Cheerleading Championships (NCC). Central Colleges of the Philippines trails University of the Philippines by only one point entering into the finals which will be held on March 4, 2007 at the ULTRA.

The National Cheerleading Competition (NCC) is the country's first and only cheerleading competition which employs international rules and regulations. This event is modeled after the American Cheerleading Competitions, the highest level of competition in the world of cheerleading. It is the only Philippine cheerleading event sanctioned by a US-based cheerleading organization, the Cheerleaders of America (COA).

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GOLF FOR A CAUSE: Dr. Carmelo Alfiler, executive director of the Philippine General Hospital, receives a check for P1 million from President Arroyo after the First Gentleman Invitational Golf tournament on Tuesday at the Wack Wack. The PGH was one of the beneficiaries of the benefit tournament of Jose Miguel Arroyo (left).

After UE and San Beda, PCU pulls out players from PBL

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE NUMBER OF STARS ARE WANING IN the PBL as Philippine Christian University pulled out seven Dolphins including Silver Cup Most Valuable Player Jason Castro.

School athletic director Alfredo Olano confirmed that the Dolphins—a Finals contender in the last two years after winning the NCAA title in 2004—will focus on their NCAA campaign.

PCU coach Joel Dualan, who served as an assistant mentor for Hapee, will also be recalled to start the Dolphins' buildup.

Hapee, runner-up to Harbour Centre in the recent Silver Cup, has decided to hold a tryout tomorrow from 12 noon to 2 p.m. at the Manila Bulletin gym in Intramuros, Manila.

The Teeth Masters aim for another championship stint in the Unity Cup, which fires off on March 24, after the Port Masters swept them, 3-0, in the Finals.

Last week, San Beda pulled out its players from Magnolia including 6-foot-8 Nigerian Sam Ekwe, Yousif Aljamal and Pong Escobal to concentrate on its NCAA title defense.

University of the East also recalled its five standouts—Mark Borboran of Hapee, Marcy Arellano and Kelvin Gregorio of Henkel Sista, Elmer Espiritu and Jorel Cañizares of Mail and More—to start the Warriors' UAAP preparations early.

Adidas King of the Road listing enters final week

REGISTRATION FOR THE 2007 Adidas King of the Road race slated March 11 at Global City in Taguig City enters its final week.

With only 950 singlets left for new entries, organizers expect the listing to end on Monday.

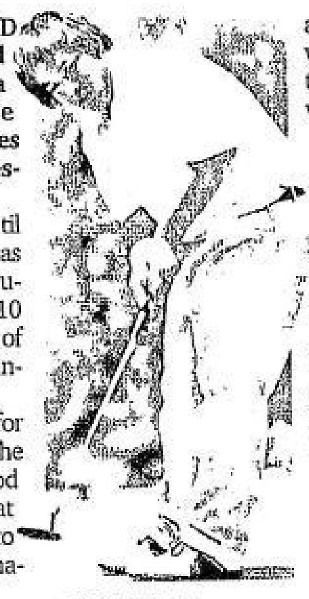
Adidas Philippines sports marketing manager Goody Custodio said that aside from the 10K KOTR race, which will have five age-group categories, a 3K run will also be held.

Registration forms are available at the 51 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, and at the Adidas Sports Kamp at the Global City in Taguig City. Forms will be accepted on Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Up for grabs in the 10K main race are P10,000 cash prizes, P10,000 in gift certificates and trophies for the national King and Queen of The Road.

Competition in the 3K run is for children 6 to 9 and 10 to 13 years old. The top finishers will receive P2,000 worth of gift certificate. Adult runners are allowed to join the 3K run but will not be entitled to awards.

Murakami leads Omega Cup with 68



MURAKAMI:
Slim lead

ARTEMIO MURAKAMI GUNNED down eight birdies but settled for a four-under-par 68 and a one-stroke lead at the start of the P660,000 Omega Cup Philippines at Wack Wack's east course yesterday.

Gerald Rosales and Ruben Sasutil submitted 69s in searing heat as they breathed down the neck of Murakami, who double bogeyed No. 10 and dropped shots on 14 and 16 of the heavily wooded course in Mandaluyong.

"I hit it well today and except for the double bogey on No. 10 and the two bogeys, it was a pretty good round," said Murakami, who beat Angelo Que on this same layout to become the youngest national amateur champion at 15 in 1999.

"I'll just play my game tomorrow (today) and hopefully win it," added Murakami, a two-year pro who teed off in the company of actor-singer Ariel Rivera and VIPs Orven Rivera and Manuel Torres.

Rosales, who rallied with a 65 in the final round to finish second to Frankie Miñoza in the Philippine Open here last month, and Sasutil stood two strokes up on veteran Rey Alit, who had the day's other sub-par round with a 71.

Juvic Pagunsan, who joined the hunt for the top P120,000 purse, showed the effect of a three-week layoff by carding a six-over par 78 like defending champion Mars Pucay.

Jerome Delariarte matched par 72 while Carito Villaroman and Mario Manubay submitted 73s.

Rey Pagunsan and Richard Sinfuego each had a 74 while Robert Pactolerin, who lost to Pucay in last year's title duel after eight playoff holes, skied to a 79.

Earlier, Oliver Hugentobler, regional sales manager for Omega; Ivan Yao, president of Swiss Prestige Holdings, Inc. the local agent for Omega; actor-sportsman Richard Gomez; Wack Wack president Luis Tan and Pucay hit the ceremonial drives to usher in the two-day tournament, which includes a best-ball team competition featuring a pro, a celebrity and two VIPs.

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RP jins place 3rd in tough Iran tourney

THE PHILIPPINE TAEKWONDO TEAM started its Southeast Asian Games preparation with a third-place finish in the recent 19th Fajar Invitational Cup in Iran.

Powered by bronze-medal performances of four team mainstays, the Philippines placed behind overall champion South Korea and host Iran, while relegating China to fourth place in the prestigious tournament.

"Our preparation (for SEAG) is formally in full swing," said national head coach Stephen Fernandez, whose charges also gained vital techniques from training with some of Iran's national players.

"It's very important for us because this is the first time we trained in Iran. We have always been exposed to the Korean way."

Olympians Donald Geisler, Thsomlee Go, JR Rivero and Alex Briones placed third in their respective divisions. Jeff Figueroa, Ernesto Mendoza III and Michael Alejandrino were the other national bets.

What made the results more special, according to Fernandez, was the presence of many Olympic hopefuls in the tournament which lured 19 teams from 15 countries.

Meanwhile, the Smart/Petron RP team flies to Seoul today to compete in the 2007 Test Event International Championships on March 4-5 in Chuncheon, South Korea.

"This is a prestigious, tough event which should give our athletes the opportunity to further hone their skills," said Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado of the team's participation.

The team is made up of Rivero, Geisler, Briones, Figueroa, Carlos Jose Padilla V, Kathleen Eunice Alora, Kirstie Elaine Alora and Sabrina Jo Simbulan. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Candidates eye revenge vs UST lady booters

GAMES TOMORROW
(*UST field*)
2 p.m.—Far Easter U vs. Nomads
4 p.m.—Candidates vs. San Tomas

THE CANDIDATES will be seeking revenge when they clash again with University of Santo Tomas tomorrow in the PFF-Ang Liga Pilipina football tournament at the UST football grounds in Sampaloc, Manila.

Composed of national pool members, the Candidates, second in the table with an 8-1 win-loss mark, absorbed their only loss in the first round at the hands of the hosts, 2-1, on Nov. 11.

So the charges of Marlon Maro hope it will be payback time in the 4 p.m. main game of the event sponsored by Mizuno and backed by Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando.

UST leads the field with a 7-0 slate.

UAAP women's football champion Far Eastern University will seek to improve its 5-1 tally as it battles Nomads (4-7) in the first game at 2 p.m.

"We encourage football fans to troop to the UST pitch on Saturday to watch these pair of matches, especially the Candidates-UST game," tournament director Cathy Rivilla said.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Fire Prince (1), Loveable Dolly/Mukels Pride (5), That Azura (4), Smile N Joy (3)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Kalmia (6), Alexis Magic (7), Hickham (2), Lion's Pride (4)
Race 3—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Air D'Truth (4), Super Jambol (8), Heart of Steel (3), In Excess (10), Dictionary/Minsk Quest (9), Royal Lady (2)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Great Emma (5), Platinum Garden (3), Please Do (2), Fujioka (1)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—White Princess (2), La Signorina (3), Ferrarione (6), Golden Harry (4)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Tereshkova (4), Nice Legs (8), Snowdipped (5), Serius Susie (2), Beautiful Pet (1)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Virgin Island (1), El Love Senora (4), Top Of D'Line 95), Demolition Jack (2)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Angel of Light (5), Out of Sight (1), Rain Dancer/Royal Fleet (7), Mighty Mare (10), Regent Skipper (3)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Jaw Breaker (6), Conglomerate (10), Weekend Master (1), Romario (2), Daog (3), Cool Turner (8)

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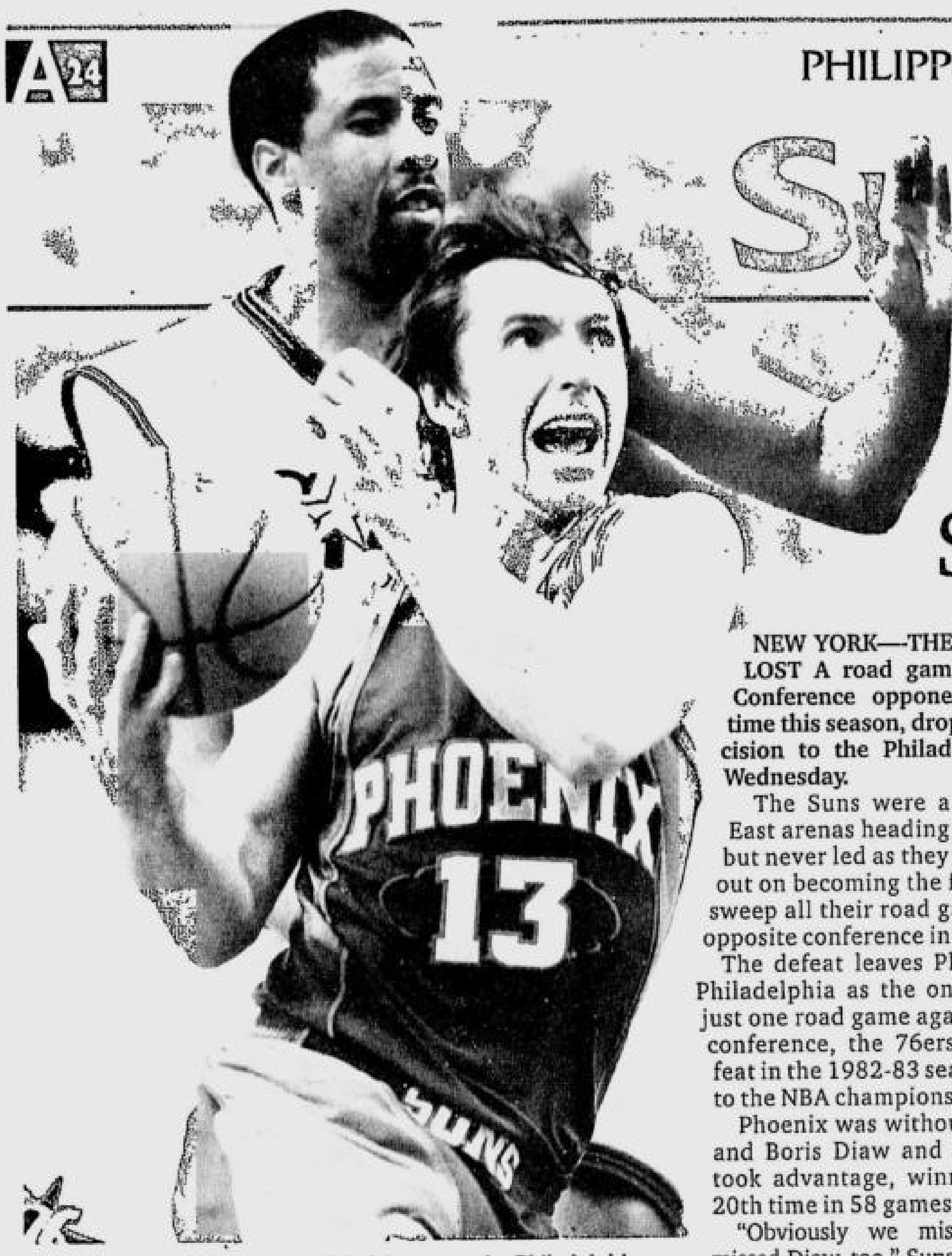


PHOENIX Suns' Steve Nash (13) drives past the Philadelphia 76ers' Andre Miller during their NBA game in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday. REUTERS

Sixers shade Suns

Shaq attack sparks Heat victory

NEW YORK—THE PHOENIX SUNS LOST A road game to an Eastern Conference opponent for the first time this season, dropping a 99-94 decision to the Philadelphia 76ers on Wednesday.

The Suns were a perfect 14-0 in East arenas heading into the contest, but never led as they narrowly missed out on becoming the first team ever to sweep all their road games against the opposite conference in a season.

The defeat leaves Phoenix tied with Philadelphia as the only teams to lose just one road game against the opposite conference, the 76ers completing the feat in the 1982-83 season on their way to the NBA championship.

Phoenix was without Shawn Marion and Boris Diaw and the lowly Sixers took advantage, winning for just the 20th time in 58 games.

"Obviously we missed Marion. We missed Diaw, too," Suns coach Mike D'Antoni told reporters. "The focus wasn't there and we got a little sloppy at the end."

The Sixers surprised the Suns with an energetic first quarter, scoring 35 points for one of their best starts in what has been a poor season.

Philadelphia maintained the lead throughout the contest, but Leandro Barbosa hit a three-pointer with 4:27 left to tie the scores at 84-84 as the Suns put on a late charge.

However, the Sixers kept their composure and regained the lead, much to the delight of the 15,914 fans in the stands.

The Suns (44-14) saw their five-game winning streak snap while the Sixers win was just their third in eight games.

Andre Iguodala scored 24 points to lead the 76ers, while Willie Green added 20 points.

Kyle Korver chipped in with 16 points and made all seven of his free throws, as Philadelphia finished a perfect 18-for-18 from the line.

Amare Stoudemire had 31 points and 14 rebounds for the Suns, while Steve Nash had 23 points and nine assists even though he left the game briefly in the first half to get a sore ankle taped.

The Suns were out-rebounded 50-37 and were held to just 15 points in the third quarter to trail by 11 points heading into the final frame, a margin they never managed to bridge.

Shaquille O'Neal scored a season-high 23 points as the Miami Heat got past the Washington Wizards, 92-83.

The Boston Celtics squandered a 23-point lead but rallied back to beat the New York Knicks, 102-94, for their second straight victory.

Carlos Boozer had 24 points and 16 rebounds as the Utah Jazz beat the Memphis Grizzlies, 104-88.

The New Orleans Hornets closed in on a Western Conference playoff spot with a 107-100 win over the Atlanta Hawks.

Andrea Bargnani scored 20 points as the Toronto Raptors beat the Houston Rockets, 106-90.

Reuters

NBA on TV today
11:30 a.m.—LA Clippers vs Seattle (replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)

Federer, Nadal advance as Davydenko stumbles

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES — DEFENDING champion Rafael Nadal survived another thriller when he edged Igor Andreev of Russia, 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (2), to reach the Dubai Open quarterfinals on Wednesday.

Top-ranked Roger Federer prolonged his career-best winning streak to 38 matches when he defeated Italy's Daniele Bracciali, 7-5, 6-3.

The world's two leading players were joined in the quarterfinals by fifth-seeded Tommy Haas, No. 7 Novak Djokovic and 2002 champion Fabrice Santoro.

However, No. 3 Nikolay Davydenko of Russia and No. 6 Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic were bounced out of the second round.

Nadal, taken to three sets by Marcos Baghdatis on Tuesday, met Andreev for the first time since 2005, when the Russian was the last man to beat Nadal on clay. Nadal has since gone a record 62 matches unbeaten on dirt, and appeared to be cruising on the desert hardcourt when he had triple break point on Andreev at 6-2, 3-3, 0-40.

But Andreev held, then broke Nadal for the first time, served out for the second set, and broke the 20-year-old Spaniard to start the third. Nadal immediately leveled and they held service to the tiebreaker, in which he surprisingly jumped to 5-1 and won it 7-2.

Next for Nadal was, another Russian, Mikhail Youzhny, who topped Berdych, 7-6 (6), 6-3, for the second time in two weeks.

Federer saved break points in the third and fifth games and broke Bracciali at 6-5 for the first set. In the second, the Swiss star went up 3-0.

Olivier Rochus of Belgium upset Davydenko, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2, for the first time since 1999 when they played on the minor tours.

Florent Serra of France spoiled his 26th birthday when he double-faulted on match point and lost to Haas, 7-6 (5), 6-3.

AP

RAFAEL Nadal returns a shot to Igor Andreev during their match Wednesday. REUTERS

Valero faces Japanese, keeps eye on Pacman

WORLD BOXING ASSOCIATION (WBA) super featherweight champion Edwin Valero, eyeing a possible bout with superstar Manny Pacquiao later this year, will defend his world title on May 3 against the talented but largely unknown Japanese Nobuhito Honmo at Tokyo's Ariake Coloseum.

Valero, a Venezuelan now living in Tokyo, Japan, had earlier indicated his interest to fight Pacquiao later this year, although his Japanese promoter, Akihiko Honda, had said that his ward is not yet ready to face the Filipino icon.

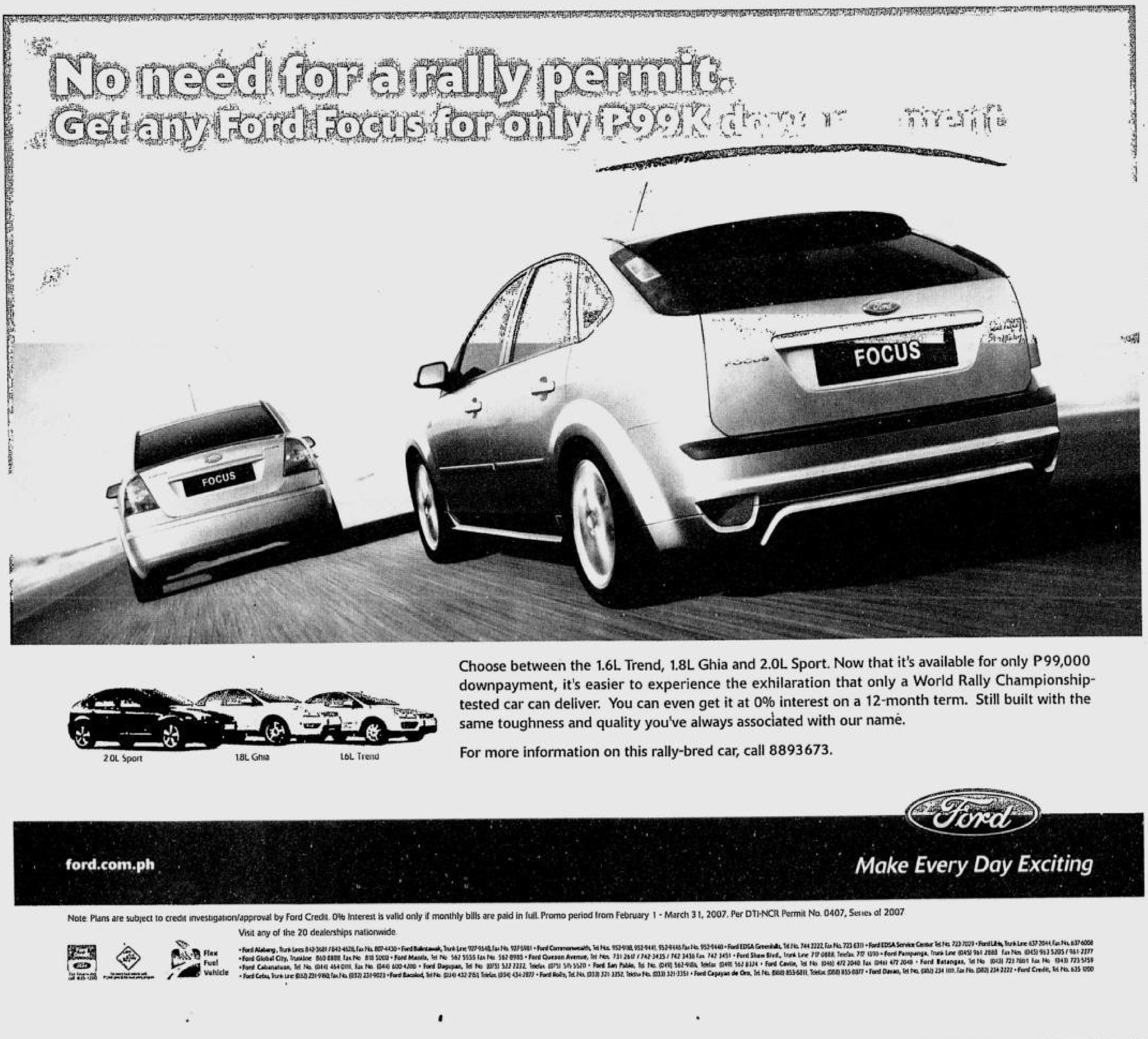
The undefeated Valero, (21-0, 21 KOs) was one of the names being floated as probable Pacquiao foe before the Mexican Jorge Solis was tapped to face the Filipino ace on April 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

Pacquiao, when told of Valero's high interest in him, reacted by saying that the Venezuelan has never faced any serious opposition, even calling the latter's victims as "tricycle drivers."

Valero reacted by saying that he will make the fire-breathing Filipino one of the tricycle drivers he was referring to when they face off in the future.

Honmo (29-4-2, 5 KOs) is the reigning OPBF super featherweight champ who beat Filipino Jimrex Jaca via unanimous decision last May 20. A light hitter, Honmo is gifted with an iron-clad defense that may be difficult for Valero to penetrate.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor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THE QUEST FOR THE elusive championship unfolds at Pasay City Cockpit as the fourth leg of the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 5-cock derby series gets underway at 5 p.m. today with 70 matches. So far, the PCCA leg winners were Tony Lasala (first leg); Louie Cua (second leg); Jake Macasaet and the tandem of Roger Segismundo and Raymond Turla (third leg). Eight derbies will be presented by the PCCA as part of the Cocker of the Year race. Meanwhile, a busy schedule awaits aficionados of Pasay Cockpit this month. For information, call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

New NFGB officers

THE NEW OFFICERS OF National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders Inc. were inducted in simple ceremonies at Alta Vista Golf Course in Cebu City recently with Mayor Tommy Osmena as guest of honor. Ricardo "Ricoy" Palmares heads the NFGB as president; Mayor Jess Nalupta, VP for Luzon; Mayor Juancho Aguirre, VP for Visayas; Nitoy Nasser, VP for Mindanao; Fred Katigbak, secretary; Al Garcia, treasurer; Arnel Anonuevo, executive director; Victor Sierra, business manager; Tongkoy Aseniero, public relations officer; Gil Sandig and Cano Daniel, board of directors; Lance dela Tore, Jesse Ledesma and Freddie Yulo, advisers.

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Nestle earmarks ₱1.3B for RP expansion

Boosting capacity to meet rising demand

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NESTLÉ PHILIPPINES INC. YESTERDAY SAID IT was investing at least P1.3 billion this year on its four plants in the country to jack up production capacity to meet rising demand for its products.

Nandu Nandkishore, NPI chair and chief executive, said in a briefing that this year's capital expenditures would bring the firm's investments since 2003 to about P10 billion.

Nandkishore said the amount earmarked for 2007 would be used to acquire manufacturing equipment and support infrastructure such as laboratories and automated process control systems.

"(These acquisitions are) aimed at improving the performance, quality and competitiveness of the company," he said.

Nestlé's factories are in Cabuyao, Laguna, which makes products for infant and adult nutrition and milk; in Lipa City for breakfast cereals and beverages; another in Cagayan de Oro City for filled milk powder and coffee, and a fourth in Quezon City for ice cream and chilled products.

These factories churn out goods under the brands Nido, Bear Brand, Nesvita, Cerelac, Milo, Chuckie, Nestea and Nescafe.

Nandkishore said the plants in Cabuyao, Cagayan de Oro and Lipa also serve as the Nestlé group's supply centers in Southeast Asia for infant nutrition, filled milk power and breakfast cereals, respectively.

"The designation of supply center recognizes a factory's world-class quality standards and efficiency levels," he explained.

He added that in 2006, NPI sales totaled P69.1 billion, with some P6.4 billion or 9 percent from exports.

Asked how much sales grew last year, Nandkishore said this was pegged at 6 percent or "in line with the growth of the country's gross domestic product."

Nandkishore said NPI would increase capacity to produce growing-up milk for the local and Southeast Asian markets.

NESTLE/ B3

PSE PRESIDENT Francis Lim (center) briefs the media during a dialogue at the PSE tektite boardroom. With him are, from left, Astro del Castillo and Francisco Liboro, Association of Stock Market Analysts of the Philippines director and president, respectively. ROMY HOMILLADA

Local stocks recover; traders remain bullish

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

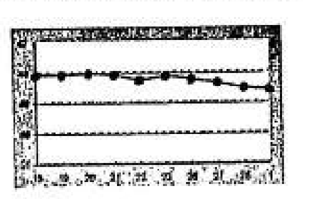
THE PHILIPPINE STOCK MARKET IS POISED to hit record highs this year on the back of an easing budget deficit, all-time low interest rates and increased capital-raising activities from companies that will go public, stock market experts predicted yesterday.

The rosy prognosis by officials of the Association of Stock Market Analysts of the Philippines (Asap) came after the sharp sell-off in global stocks led by China and the United States on Wednesday over speculation on the fate of Shanghai's inflated stocks and a likely hard landing for the US economy.

The PSE's main stock price index, however, managed to recover its footing from Wednesday's

STOCKS/ B4

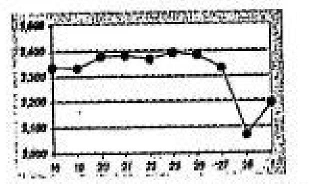
INDICATORS



₱48.54 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 28, 2007

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B3)

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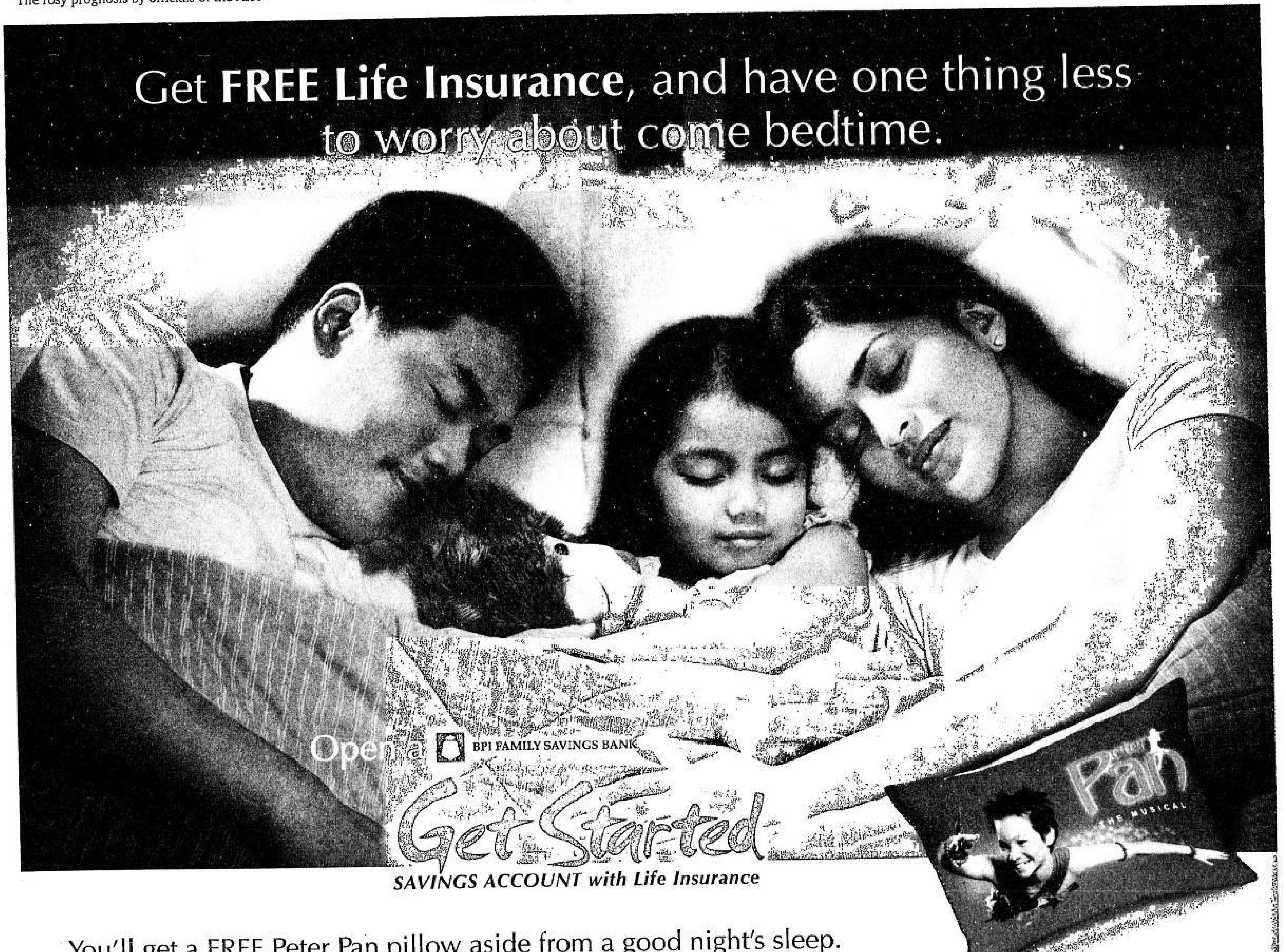
RP can withstand global shocks, gov't claims /B5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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0652, Series of 2007, See flyers for details.
**Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0373, Series of 2007.

Dell Inc. opens second contact center in RP

Quezon City hub will employ 1,200 people

By Riza T. Olchondra

DELL PHILIPPINES, THE LOCAL contact center of US computer maker Dell Inc., opened on Thursday its second hub in the country at the Eastwood Cyberpark in Libis, Quezon City.

The new site will further boost Dell's customer contact network, which includes more than 25 locations worldwide.

The success of the company's first hub at the Mall of Asia in Pasay City apparently prompted Dell to open the second center.

In the Asia Pacific region, Dell maintains direct sales operations in Australia, Brunei, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

The company has manufacturing operations in in Penang, Malaysia, and China for customers in the region. Technical support for customers in the region is provided by contact centers in the Philippines, China and Malaysia.

Dell has started recruiting people for its Quezon City site, which will have a workforce of 1,200.

Company officials declined to discuss details of its investments in the second contact center. Trade Secretary Peter Favila, however, was earlier quoted in reports as saying that Dell had invested P466 million in the second call center site.

Dell reportedly invested P366 million last year for its first customer support facility in Manila, whose workforce has already grown from 100 in January 2006 to about 1,400 at present.

Dell Philippines Quezon City site manager Susheel Bhasin said that based on the performance of the company's site in Pasay City, there was demand for its services.

"Dell is growing and we will continue to provide technical support to our global network," Bhasin said when asked about the firm's expansion plans.

He said that while the company was always on the lookout for new opportunities, it had no expansion plans outside of Manila for the near future.

"We will decide as we go along," he said.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo, Quezon city Mayor Sonny Belmonte, and Dell vice president Dick Hunter cheer the opening of Dell's customer support center at the Eastwood Cyberpark in Quezon City.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

SMDC profit up 51% in 2006

SM DEVELOPMENT CORP. (SMDC) HAS posted a 51-percent increase in profit last year to P984 million, the company said in a disclosure to the stock exchange

The firm also disclosed plans to sell 55 million worth of treasury shares. This was earlier approved by the SMDC board. Proceeds of the sale would be used to support the firm's ongoing and future real estate projects and to purchase SMDC shares in the future if needed.

At its present market price of P4.30 a share, the sale could raise P236 million.

The company said it generated P1.4 billion in revenue last year, up 66 percent from year-ago level. This, it said, was derived mainly from the sale of condominium units.

SMDC sold units from condominium projects in Bicutan dubbed Chateau Elysee and in Sta. Mesa called Mezza Residences. Profits booked came mostly from the Bicutan project.

SMDC president Roger Cabuñag said, "2006 was a record year for us as we benefited from the buoyant residential property market."

In addition to its real estate operation, SMDC booked gains from the sale of marketable securities amounting to P225 million, expanding by 126 percent from year-ago level. Income from interest and dividends stood at P203 million.

For 2007, SMDC plans to launch three new residential projects such as those in Susana Heights, Katipunan and North Edsa. *Elizabeth S. Lacson*

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Water crisis and agriculture

COMMENTARY

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) and Unicef's report entitled "Water for Life, Making It Happen" states that "lack of drinking water and sanitation kill about 4,500 children a day and sentence their siblings, parents and neighbors to sickness, squalor and enduring poverty."

Here are some of the findings on the return on investment (ROI) used in the broad sense for investing in drinking water and sanitation (from a World Health Organization study):

- Health care savings of $7 billion a year for health agencies and $340 million for individuals.
- 320 million productive days gained each year in the 15-59 age group, an extra 272 million school attendance days a year, and an added 1.5 billion healthy days for children under 5 years old, together attendance productivity gains of $9.9 billion a year.
- Time savings from more convenient drinking water and sanitation services reach 20 billion working days a year, giving a productivity payback of some $63 billion a year.
- Value of deaths averted, based on discounted future earnings, amounting to $3.6 billion a year.

The WHO study from which these figures are taken shows a total payback of $84 billion a year from $11.3 billion a year investment needed to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals' drinking water and sanitation target. It also shows some remarkable additional returns if simple household water treatment accompanies the drinking water and sanitation improvements.

The same report gives the following statistics: "In 2002, there were 2.6 billion people without even the most basic sanitation facilities. Providing improved sanitation for an additional 1.8 billion from 2002 to 2015 will achieve the MDG target to halve the proportion unserved by 2015. But, because of rising population, there will be 1.8 billion people having to cope with unhygienic sanitation facilities at that time."

Agriculture

Another study called "Coping with Water Scarcity, UN Thematic Initiatives" states the following:

- Today, agriculture accounts for 70 percent of all water used globally, up to 95 percent in several developing countries. To keep pace with the growing demand for food, it is estimated that 14 percent more freshwater will need to be withdrawn for agricultural purposes in the next 30 years.
- Adding to the pressures on agricultural use is the increased awareness of the instrumental value of water in maintaining environmental services and ecosystem resilience. Increasing the efficiency of water use and enhancing agricultural water productivity at all levels in the production chains is becoming a priority in a rapidly growing number of countries. A systematic approach to agricultural water productivity requires actions at all levels, from crops to irrigation schemes, and up to national and international economic systems, including the trade in agricultural products.
- It calls for an informed discussion on the scope for improved water productivity to ameliorate inter-sectoral competition for water resources and optimize social and economic outcomes.

Needed action

Our government should allocate more funds to address these issues. The agriculture sector can help this problem in a major way.

Falling underground levels, effluent from intensive animal husbandry, and watershed degradation are but a few issues that agriculture should address.

Since agriculture is the world's largest user of water, this sector, both private and government, should work together to manage the problem by the use of appropriate technology to increase agricultural productivity using less water. This can be in the areas of irrigation, crop management systems and development of plant varieties that consume less water.

According to the United Nations Environment Program (Unep), demand for water will exceed availability by 56 percent and two-thirds of the world's population will face water stress. The Unep further states that "This calls for major investments in infrastructure and management and political will. The private sector is finding out that more and more water-related costs are rising, both direct and indirect."

One method that uses much less water for rice is the system for rice intensification (SRI). This received less than P2 million in Department of Agriculture subsidy last year, as compared to more than P600 million subsidy for water intensive rice production program. *(For more information on this, please text or call Robert Verzola at 63 9212505520.)*

Conclusion

The water problem is critical, affecting all aspects of our lives, including economic and social.

While there have been national water conferences in the past, the agriculture sector did not meet as a group to prepare for these conferences. Since it is the most significant sector in the water crisis, it is recommended that agriculture takes the lead by calling its own "Water Crisis in Agriculture Conference." After this, they can then ask for a national multisectoral conference where agriculture will be well prepared to help address the water crisis. This month, we hope to have discussions on this with the government and private sector.

(The author is Agriwatch chair. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112)

ISABELA – I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Victoria, Alicia, Isabela
Tel. No. (078) 6627103 / 6627983 / 6627810
Fax No. (078) 6627103 / 6627917

The Isabela – 1 Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Iselco – 1) wishes to invite interested suppliers for Public Bididng for the supply and delivery of the following:

Schedule 1 : Pole Line Hardwares
Schedule 2 : Special Equipments
Schedule 3 : Wires and Cables
Schedule 4 : Poles and Crossarms

Interested parties may secure bid documents and checklist of qualification requirements at the office of the PBAC Secretary at Institutional Services Manager's office and look for Ms. Luzviminda D. Torres or call cel no. 09189429720 or call Engr. Romeo M. Villacampa at Cel. No. 09189226973.

The schedule of Bidding activities are as follows:

PARTICULARS	DATE/TIME
Issuance of bid documents/checklist of qualification requirements.	March 5 – March 19, 2007 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Pre-Qualification conference	March 16, 2007 10:00 AM
Submission / Opening of bids	March 20, 2007 / 10:00 AM

Checklist of Qualification Requirements are the following: (To be submitted during the pre-qualification conference)

1. Non-refundable filing fee in the amount of Three thousand pesos only (P3,000.00) in the form of cash.
2. Complete set of legal documents of the company, SEC Registration, Articles of Incorporation and by laws, company profile, business registration and license papers.
3. Audited Financial Statement (Balance sheet and Income Statement) duly filed/stamped received by BIR.
4. If represented by an agent of the firm, it must have a letter of Authorization from the President/Manager or Owner.

The ISELCO – 1 reserves the right to reject any or all bids for valid and justified reason, waive any defect thereon and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the cooperative (ISELCO – 1). The ISELCO – 1 likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) MR. ORLANDO B. RAMIL
OIC / General Manager

(PDI–March 2 & 3, 2007)

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DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepED-Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Delivery of Tabulating Stock Forms indicated below:

Package	Item No.	Item Descriptions/ Specifications	Minimum Quantity	Approved Budget per Item (in pesos)	Bid Submission Deadline/Opening of Bids
I	1	Tabulating Stock Forms, 5 ply, 11 x 14 7/8, Graylines w/ both sides perforation, 250 sets/box 70 gsm for the 1st sheet & 56 gsm for the 2nd to 5th sheets	2,400 boxes	2,280,000.00	March 27, 2007 10:00 a.m. at the LCC Conference Rm. 413, 4th Flr., Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City
II	1	Tabulating Stock Forms, 1 ply 11 x 10 5/8, Graylines w/ both sides perforation, 2000 sets/box, 70 gsm	1,000 boxes	1,050,000.00	
	2	Tabulating Stock Forms, 3 ply, 11 x 10 5/8, Graylines w/ both sides perforation, 500 sets/box 70 gsm for 1st sheet & 56 gsm for the 2nd to 3rd sheets	120 boxes	90,000.00	
	3	Tabulating Stock Forms, 1 ply, 11 x 14 7/8, Graylines w/ both sides perforation, 2000 sets/box, 70 gsm	200 boxes	255,000.00	
	4	Tabulating Stock Forms, 3 ply, 11 x 14 7/8, Graylines with both sides perforation, 500 sets/box 70 gsm for the 1st sheet & 56 gsm for the 2nd to 3rd sheets	200 boxes	264,000.00	

Bids received that exceed the approved budget per item shall be rejected. A bidder shall offer the maximum or the most number of quantities for the respective ABC per item. A bidder shall bid for at least 100% of the quantities of all the items in each package, and may bid for one or both of the Packages. Any bid which does not comply with this requirement shall be rejected. Bid price evaluation and award shall be on a per item basis. A pre-bid conference shall be held on March 13, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at LCC Conference Room, DepED Complex, Pasig City. Bidders may submit bids before March 27, 2007 during office hours to the BAC through the BAC Secretariat at the address indicated in the next paragraph.

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting on March 2, 2007 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php1,000.00 in cash to the DepED Cashier

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http//www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org or call DepED-PS at telephone nos 636-6543; 636-6542 or fax no. 633-9343.

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties.

(Sgd.) TEODOSIO C. SANGIL, JR.
Undersecretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI - March 2, 2007)

LANAO DEL SUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
LASURECO

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The Lanao del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LASURECO) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) with office address at Matampay, Marawi City is inviting all prospective / interested suppliers / bidders to bid for the repair of one (1) unit 5 MVA power transformer and to bid / price the following various materials described below to wit:

ITEM NO.	PARTICULARS
1	STEEL POLES *OCTAGONAL / HEAVY DUTY* 30 FEET (STANDARD)
2	CONDUCTOR *BARE WIRE ACSR* 2/0 AWG 1/0 AWG
3	CONDUCTOR *INSULATED ACSR* 2/0 AWG 1/0 AWG
4	DISTRIBUTION TRANSFORMER, CSP (Brand New) 15 KVA 25 KVA 50 KVA
5	CUT-OUT ARRESTER COMBINATION *WITH LOAD BREAKER* 100 AMPERES 200 AMPERES
6	LINE HARDWARE (STANDARD)
7	KWH METERS 1 PHASE 220 V, 10C30 A, BOTTOM CONNECTED 1 PHASE C1 100, 2W, 240V, 60Hz, 30A FORM 1S 1 PHASE C1 100, 2W, 240V, 60Hz, 30A FORM 2S
8	OTHER MATERIALS 1. CLUSTER BOX 2. WASHER 2¼ 3. CONDUCTOR, DUPLEX # 2 4. COMPRESSION CONNECTOR YHO 150 4. COMPRESSION CONNECTOR YHO 200 4. COMPRESSION CONNECTOR YHO 300 4. COMPRESSION CONNECTOR YHO 400 4. COMPRESSION CONNECTOR YPC 28 AU
9	CURRENT TRANSFORMER (CT) *RATING* 50 5 100 5 150 5
10	SERVICE DROP WIRE *DUPLEX NO. 6*

Above items/ materials and hardwares are intended for the construction and expansion of backbone/lateral lines of 100 barangays with a total of 120 circuit kilometers length

The Proceedings / particulars relative to the Pre-Bidding Conferences, Evaluation of Bids, Pre & Post Qualifications and Awards of contract shall be based and governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) and/or NEA policies on procurement guidelines for electric cooperatives

Schedule of BAC Activities

	BAC ACTIVITIES	VENUE	DATE
1	Receipt of letters of intent including company profiles from prospective bidders	LASURECO Main Office Matampay, Marawi City	March 6, 2007
2	Pre-Qualification of Bidders / Suppliers	-do-	March 9, 2007
3	Pre-Bid Conference and Issuance of Bid Documents	-do-	March 14, 2007
4	Dropping and Opening of Bids	-do-	March 21, 2007
5	First Delivery of equipment and materials	-do-	March 31, 2007
6	Second Delivery of equipment and materials	-do-	April 15, 2007

(Sgd.) COL. TATAR M. BORIONGAN, GSC (RET)
Chairman BAC

(Sgd.) BALIAMEN P. MAMAINTE, MNSA, CESO III
General Manager

(PDI--March 2, 2007)

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 1, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11	120,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58.5	59.5	57.5	58	1,767,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67	67	66	67	2,439,300
China Banking Corp.	840	900	840	900	6,490
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.58	0.58	0.55	0.55	10,460,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	100	103	100	103	47,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62	64	62	63	2,873,000
Philippine National Bank	51	51	50.5	50.5	41,000
Phil. Savings Bank	62	62.5	61.5	62	66,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	40	41.5	40	41.5	721,100
Security Bank Corp.	78	80	78	80	29,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	63	63.5	62	62	43,800
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	300,000
Citisecoline.Com Inc.	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.5	842,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1650	1650	1650	1,070
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.04	2.12	2.04	2.04	336,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	760	770	750	765	5,110
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2060	2060	2060	2060	630
Ivantage Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.62	1.64	1,416,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.3	6.4	6	6.1	46,002,000
First Gen Corp.	52	54.5	52	53	2,437,800
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	76	78	76	77.5	620,900
Manila Electric Co. A	73.5	76	73	74	324,500
Manila Electric Co. B	74	75.5	73	74.5	3,216,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.4	9.7	9.4	9.5	8,921,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.7	4.5	4.55	7,481,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.29	1,110,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	2,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.36	1.42	1.36	1.36	1,499,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	26.5	25	26	40,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	50	52	50	50.5	817,700
Liberty Flour Mills, Inc.	22	22	22	22	8,000
RFM Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	17,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	63	63.5	285,600
San Miguel Corp. B	75	76	74.5	75.5	222,200
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.08	2.16	2.08	2.08	1,123,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	18.5	17.25	18	1,367,800
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.68	1.78	1.68	1.72	55,192,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.4	4.75	4.4	4.75	4,794,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.2	8.6	8.2	8.6	1,089,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	6,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.5	5.8	5.5	5.8	461,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5.1	4.95	5	1,074,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	10,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	100,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	300,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc	0.39	0.39	0.36	0.37	27,810,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.013	0.013	0.011	0.012	260,100,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	76,500,000
Ayala Corp.	590	595	570	570	173,840
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.75	0.75	980,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.4	8.6	8.3	8.5	5,516,000
AJO.Net Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.0625	0.0625	24,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.2	3.3	3.15	3.3	715,000
APC Group Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.38	10,210,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	523,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.3	1.38	1.3	1.38	15,623,000
ATN Holdings Inc	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	75,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	28,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	6.3	6.8	6.2	6.5	3,608,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	33,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.75	3.85	3.65	3.75	60,577,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.5	7.2	6.5	7.2	2,666,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.2	5.5	5.2	5.3	3,031,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.32	1,510,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.95	3	2.8	2.8	484,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	13	12.25	12.75	2,788,900
Medco Holdings	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38	280,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	400,000
Magnum Holdings Inc	10.5	11	10	10.25	2,048,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.08	2.08	2	2.02	1,924,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	8,500,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.29	0.3	31,210,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	10,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	64,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.22	47,490,000
SM Investments Corp.	357.5	367.5	357.5	365	216,100
South China Resources Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.14	144,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.66	1.7	236,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.17	0.185	3,070,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16	16.5	16	16.25	15,673,700
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	270,000
Belle Corp.	1.44	1.48	1.4	1.4	21,401,000
A. Brown Co. Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1,489,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.49	0.47	0.47	2,560,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.9	490,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.6	2.65	2.46	2.5	754,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.3	1,700,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	380,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.87	0.88	0.83	0.84	60,390,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	359,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0725	0.075	0.07	0.075	8,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.76	1.66	1.66	169,151,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	440,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	1,000
Interport Res.	0.012	0.013	0.011	0.012	203,600,000
Interport Res. B	0.013	0.013	0.011	0.011	105,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.5	0.52	0.49	0.5	5,930,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.86	0.88	4,950,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	2,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	12,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.1	3.3	3	3.05	76,390,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	4.9	4.7	4.8	168,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.61	0.65	0.58	0.65	21,890,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	450,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	90,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18.5	20	18.5	19.5	5,491,500
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.65	7,940,000
SM Development Corp.	4.2	4.25	3.9	4	4,750,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	12.25	11.75	11.75	18,285,200
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.81	0.81	0.74	0.76	2,680,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.17	35,550,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.25	24	23.25	24	58,500
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.88	1.9	1.82	1.82	9,213,000
Globe Telecom Inc	1370	1370	1330	1355	16,240
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7.3	7.5	7.2	7.3	4,538,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2400	2460	2375	2420	378,420
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	16,540,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	20,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	6,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.42	2.44	553,000
IPVG Corp.	5.9	6	5.7	6	3,740,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.065	0.055	0.065	807,900,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.68	1.6	1.68	1,732,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.4	2.4	2.34	2.36	246,000
Philweb Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.048	0.049	473,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	72,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	12,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	29	32	29	30	5,177,800
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	114,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	8.5	10	8.5	10	22,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.85	3	2.85	2.85	5,461,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	160,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	800,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	1	1	0.93	0.94	2,070,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	810	810	810	810	770
Ipeople Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.4	57,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.95	3.05	2.85	2.85	4,056,000
Paxys Inc	27	29	27	28.5	2,189,200
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6.4	6.4	5.4	5.5	2,567,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.4	6.5	5.7	5.8	2,744,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	520,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9	9.2	8.9	9	3,014,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.75	12.25	11.75	12	218,700
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	12,000
Geograce Res. Phil., Inc.	1.8	1.86	1.76	1.8	179,096,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.31	0.32	0.29	0.29	63,310,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.35	0.38	0.34	0.35	26,430,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.03	0.031	0.029	0.03	1,435,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.035	0.036	0.034	0.034	987,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.02	0.021	0.019	0.02	2,860,700,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.15	4.2	15,022,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.75	76,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.72	0.72	0.7	0.7	1,920,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.24	1.26	1.18	1.2	10,813,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.34	3,690,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	236,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.015	341,500,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	2,059,300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10	10	10	10	121,000

CURRENCIES

March 1, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.755458	1.000000	48.5830
Japan	Yen	0.006378	0.008442	0.4101
United Kingdom	Pound	1.483795	1.964100	95.4219
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096706	0.128010	6.2191
Switzerland	Franc	0.619888	0.820546	39.8646
Canada	Dollar	0.646409	0.855652	41.5701
Singapore	Dollar	0.494151	0.654108	31.7785
Australia	Dollar	0.595928	0.788830	38.3237
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.003974	2.652661	128.8742
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201461	0.266674	12.9558
Brunei	Dollar	0.492540	0.651975	31.6749
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022351	0.029586	1.4374
UAE	Dirham	0.205701	0.272287	13.2285
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.323700	64.3093
Korea	Won	0.000802	0.001062	0.0516
China	Yuan**	0.097598	0.129191	6.2765
Argentina	Peso	0.243696	0.322581	15.6720
Brazil	Real	0.357529	0.473261	22.9924
Denmark	Kroner	0.134184	0.177620	8.6293
India	Rupee	0.017138	0.022686	1.1022
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215784	0.285633	13.8769
Mexico	New Peso	0.067641	0.089536	4.3499
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530035	0.701607	34.0862
South Africa	Rand	0.104316	0.138083	6.7085
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022931	0.030354	1.4747

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 28, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 28, 2007

Nestle earmarks P1.3B for RP expansion

From page B1

"The demand for (chocolate-flavored drink) Milo continues to grow and investments are being made to address demand," he said.

"Production capacities for breakfast cereals and coffee are being upgraded to maximize output and increase productivity," he added.

The NPI chief added that the firm was continuing to invest in programs that help improve the farming methods of coffee growers such as the Nestlé Experimental and Demonstration Farm in Tagum City, Davao del Norte.

He said that through efforts like the Coffee-Based Sustainable Farming System, which encourages farmers to plant coffee as a main crop along with secondary ones like peanuts, cabbage and ampalaya, NPI has been buying 80 percent of local coffee beans at prevailing world prices.

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	Feb. 26, 2007	Feb. 19, 2007
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Balanced Fund	1.426715	1.407175
Equity Fund	1.690936	1.651253

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

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Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week Feb. 27, 2007	Last Week. Feb. 20, 2007
Bond Fund - Peso	1.62878	1.62547
Managed Fund - Peso	1.88850	1.89182
Growth Fund - Peso	1.80140	1.81909
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3742	1.3676

* Note These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

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Jazz 1.3 S MT	P650,000	P97,500	P12,596	P325,000	P7,316
CIVIC 1.8V MT	P772,000	P115,800	P15,230	P386,000	P8,959
CR-V Select	P999,000	P149,850	P18,229	P499,500	P10,114
ACCORD 2.4VT-1L AT	P1,470,000	P220,500	P28,999	P735,000	P17,059

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Gov't tightens monitoring, release of tax incentives

Discrepancies in BOI, BIR reports disturbing

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE YESterday forged separate memoranda of agreement with the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority to plug "disturbing" loopholes in the country's fiscal incentive system for investors.

The agreements provide for a tighter framework in the monitoring and release of fiscal incentives, particularly the income tax holiday and the 5-percent tax on gross income (GIT), in order to safeguard the government's fiscal gains.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the discrepancies between the records of the trade department and the BIR on fiscal incentives granted were "disturbing" and should be addressed by this tighter monitoring scheme.

In 2004, for instance, Teves noted that the BIR reported some P19.4 billion worth of fiscal perks claimed as against only P7.6 billion that the Department of Trade and Industry claimed to have granted.

The huge discrepancy was evident even in the previous year, with tax perks reported by the BIR hitting P21.1 billion in 2003 versus the DTI's approval of only P6.7 billion.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Bunag said companies that had availed themselves of incentives that they did not deserve would not be allowed to go scot-free.

The DTI is set to provide the BIR with a master list of all companies eligible for incentives and the BIR will audit all incentives granted.

The two MOAs will establish the systems for exchange of information, coordination and cooperation among the BIR and the country's two major incentive-giving bodies, the BOI and the Peza, as well as the BOI in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, toward making the tax incentive system more efficient.

They define the responsibilities and tasks of each agency as well as the registered enterprises. They also set deadlines on reporting and documentation.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said the tighter framework should allow the government to meet its objective of encouraging investments, while also meeting its revenue targets.

Under the new system, the registered enterprise is required to secure a certificate of income tax holiday or GIT entitlement from the BOI, BOI-ARMM or Peza. The certificate must be attached upon the filing of the annual income tax return with the BIR. Only then can it file for ITH or GIT availment.

For a BOI or BOI-ARMM-registered enterprise, it has six months to file for claims while a Peza-registered firm has 30 days to file.

Aboitiz Equity posts 19% profit growth

ABOITIZ EQUITY VENTURES Inc. said its net income in 2006 rose by 19 percent to P3.754 billion from year-ago, which translated to earnings per share of P0.76.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) rose by 5 percent to P6.87 billion.

For the fourth quarter, alone, AEV's net income jumped by 125 percent due largely to nonrecurring incomes, including gains from the sale of certain assets of its transport and food businesses.

The company said income contributions from all business groups had increased in 2006, withe the biggest share coming from the power group at P2.26 billion, up 12 percent from year-ago level. The generation companies turned in P1.09 billion, up 3.4 percent, while the contribution of distribution utilities went up by 21 percent to P1.18 billion.

In December 2006, the partnership between Aboitiz Power and SN Power of Norway won the bid for the 360-megawatt (MW) Magat hydroelectric plant in Isabela.

AEV's banking investments contributed P1.1 billion in 2006, up 7 percent from 2005. UnionBank's performance was affected by the impact of expenses related to the purchase of International Exchange Bank and the industry-wide margin compression as interest rates declined further.

The food group increased its income contribution by 34 percent at P510 million.

The transport group posted the highest percentage increase in contribution, turning in P142 million, a 313-percent jump from year-ago level.

Aboitiz Transport System Corp. posted a consolidated revenue of P10.5 billion and a net income of P197.3 million in 2006.

In a statement, ATSC said it was able to continue lowering its costs and expenses in spite of rising fuel prices through various cost-cutting initiatives.

During the period, ATSC cut its expenses by P801 million.

With reports from Riza T. Olchondra and Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

TVI unit in RP enters new exploration phase

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CANADIAN MINING FIRM TVI PAcific Inc. yesterday announced its Philippine affiliate was undertaking a new phase of exploration drilling in its Balabag gold and silver prospect in Zamboanga del Sur for a closer look into the amount of mineral deposit in the area.

The Balabag prospect is located some 75-kilometer east-northeast of TVI Resource Development (Philippines) Inc.'s Canatuan mine in Zamboanga del Norte, which produces gold and silver.

Clifford M. James, TVI president and chief executive, said in a statement that TVIRD had moved to infill drilling of the mineral veins dubbed Tinago-Miswi-Lalab at Balabag. This is to define the outline of the gold vein system and get a clearer picture of estimates on the value of minerals found there.

Infill drilling refers to the drilling of additional holes within the defined outline of a mineral deposit for the purpose of increasing reserves. In Balabag, the new holes are being drilled at intervals of 25 meters.

The infill drilling program currently deploys four drills provided by TVI's drilling subsidiary, EDCO Drilling Corp.

James said the infill program was needed to complete a scoping study—which paves the way for a decision on whether to proceed with a feasibility study—to assess the Tinago-Miswi-Lalab mineralized zone was expected to be completed in mid-2007.

Stocks recover; traders still bullish

From page B1

slump and gained 122.7 points or 4 percent yesterday to close at 3,190.12. Gainers trounced losers 105 to 22 on value turnover of P5.4 billion.

Asap director Astro del Castillo said the Philippines remained attractive to foreign investors since prices here were still cheap compared with other Asia-Pacific markets, trading at roughly 16 times their price-to-earnings ratio (or current trading price divided by net earnings per share). Regional markets were trading at an average 18 times price-to-earnings.

Del Castillo said the Philippines was trading at par with Hong Kong, Singapore and Indonesia at between 15 and 16 times.

"Is this the rally's end, I'd like to think it's a new start," Asap president Francisco Liboro said.

Philippine stocks on Wednesday bled their heaviest in more than nine years, spooked by the tense selldown in Shanghai and Wall Street. The sharp decline was worldwide.

The PSEi on Wednesday tumbled 263.84 points or 7.9 percent to 3,067.45, almost erasing the previous month's gains.

It was the index's biggest percentage decline since Jan. 9, 1998, when the index lost 8.33 percent, the PSE said. It was also the biggest points decline since Feb. 28, 1990, when the old Makati and Manila stock exchanges adopted a new method in computing the index, the PSE said.

PSE president Francis Lim said that despite the selling, daily trading values reflected that investors have heavily participated in the stock market.

Daily value turnover as of Feb. 28 rose to P4.72 billion from P2.32 billion as of end-December, he said. Net foreign buying as of Feb. 27 stood at P15.6 billion, up from P14.17 billion as of the same period in 2006.

Aside from record low interest rates, a strong peso and low inflation, Del Castillo said the key drivers that would keep investors glued to the Philippine growth story this year were election spending and stable oil prices that could soften to $60 a barrel from $65 last year.

What would also boost investor confidence in the stock market are fresh new public offerings. PSE's Lim said he was not aware of any company wavering in its interest to pursue an IPO even after the market selldown on Wednesday.

Asap and PSE officials said there were 14 companies expected to list between 2007 and 2010. These are sourcing and procurement firm BayanTrade (2008), Gokongwei-led airline Cebu Pacific Air, oil player Enerfuse Holdings Inc. (2008 to 2010), Figaro Coffee (2008), technology firm Intelligent Wave Philippines Inc., Anchor Land Holdings Inc. (2007), National Reinsurance Corporation of the Philippines (2007), lottery equipment provider Pacific Online Systems Corp. (2007), financial advisory firm Pikeville Resources (2007), oil firm Phoenix Petroleum Philippines (2007), Seaoil Philippines Corp. (2007 or 2008), STI Group (2007), Yehey Inc. (2007) and television giant GMA Network Inc., which is expected to file its application in June.

What's the news behind the news?
- Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in Chief, Philippine Daily Inquirer
What nonsense is this?
- Eugenia Duran-Apostol
Founder, Philippine Daily Inquirer
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RP can withstand global shocks, gov't claims

Big drop in stock market described as an 'overreaction'

By Doris C. Dumlao

TOP GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC officials yesterday said the Philippines was in a good position to withstand global shocks even as economists warned of further volatility in the equities market.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri in a briefing yesterday said: "The drop is actually more of an over-reaction and a tolerable correction in the general trend of a bull run: Philippine stocks in 2006 gained an average of 42 percent profit."

"Fundamentals are solid, so a strong rebound is expected," Neri added.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that given the fiscal consolidation that the government had taken, he was hoping that the local financial markets could stabilize in the next 10 days.

"The better fiscal performance and the more favorable debt dynamics have lessened the economy's dependence on external financing," said Bango Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

"As a result, the economy's vulnerability to the vicissitudes of global economic conditions and global market sentiment has been reduced," Tetangco added.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila, who used to be president of the Philippine Stock Exchange, also said the country remained attractive to foreign investors.

"I've talked to stock brokers and they said any downward correction is an opportunity to buy more stocks," Favila said.

Neri expressed confidence that the country would attract greater investments this year for 2007 marked the start of the ambitious infrastructure projects pledged during the President's last State-of-the-Nation address.

"They are on track. Almost all of the top 20 projects will be finished by 2008. Private construction will be strong as well due to overseas Filipino workers buying condominium units, call centers buying office space, and the malls which continue to multiply," Neri said.

Some economists believe that the sell-offs in global markets could continue for a while, but were more in the nature of a correction.

London-based economist Kevin Grice of American Express Bank, in a Feb. 28 commentary, said unlike the volatility, which adversely affected emerging markets in May last year, the uncertainties this time may not ease so easily.

"Firstly, markets generally have moved higher since the second quarter of 2006, in some cases higher, while corporate profits growth has moved down, with profit expectations set to move lower still," Grice said.

Secondly, uncertainties over US stocks would likely persist, with the activity data in the world's largest economy set to stay weak for a time while core inflation would rule out any near term Federal Reserve rate cut.

Thirdly, he said Chinese equities remained overpriced while there was also a significant risk of a similar sell-off in India.

"Finally, geo-political risks—what the US and Europe will do on Iran's nuclear program—will linger for a while," Grice said.

DOE issues transport LPG rules

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HAS issued guidelines governing the sale of liquefied petroleum gas to the transport sector.

Department Circular No. 2007-02-2002 covers all aspects of the auto-LPG business, from supplying, hauling, storing, handling, and marketing to distributing auto-LPG to motorists.

The circular said that entities interested in entering the industry should first secure a Standards Compliance Certificate (SCC) from the DOE.

To get one, pertinent documents should be submitted, including the details of their business activities, as well as permits and licenses from various government agencies.

Permits should be issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bureau of Product Standards and the concerned local government unit.

LPG bulk suppliers and haulers should also submit a list of their auto-LPG buyers, including, but not limited to, taxi companies, garage-based clients and fleet operators.

Auto-LPG dispensing stations, on the other hand, are also required to submit their quarterly sales and purchase volume.

The circular likewise requires auto-LPG sellers to strictly follow product quality standards for LPG products for automotive use, as stated under Philippine National Standard/DOE QS 005:2005.

According to data from the DOE, there are currently 3,955 auto-LPG vehicles nationwide, some of which are owned by the government and private users.

In Metro Manila alone, there are now 20 service station-based, 11 stand-alone, five refilling/bulk plant-based, and five garage-based auto-LPG stations.

In the Visayas, there are at least 20 dispensing stations—seven of which are stand alone and 13 are garage-based.

Another eight dispensing stations are in Mindanao.

There are also nine auto-LPG conversion companies in 14 different locations in Metro Manila.

ADB urges faster regional integration

By Daxim L. Lucas

ASIAN NATIONS SHOULD ADOPT A more realistic approach toward regional integration, focusing on smaller "doable" goals rather than pushing for a European-style union, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

In a speech before regional business leaders yesterday, ADB president Haruhiko Kuroda outlined the main elements that comprise a "workable framework" for Asian cooperation and regional integration for the next 10 to 15 years.

"We should rely on a pragmatic step-by-step bottom-up approach, rather than on conceiving and implementing a comprehensive pan-Asian 'vision' or grand plan, as was done in Europe," he said.

Kuroda made his comments during the Asian Business Conference in Makati City yesterday.

In recent years, Asian nations have expressed their desire to integrate their diverse economies into a single market to be able to better compete with North America and Europe.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, in particular, has set a goal of market integration by 2015.

The ADB chief pointed out, however, that reaching a broad political and social consensus needed to develop a far-reaching pan-Asian grand plan of regional integration "does not appear feasible at this stage."

This is because of the extreme economic diversity of countries in the region.

While Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan have annual per capita incomes of between $20,000 and $40,000, people in Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal and Tajikistan on the average earn less than $500 a year, according to the multilateral funding agency.

Thus, Kuroda said that Asia and the Pacific should adopt a "multi-speed" approach to cooperation, where a few countries could start working together on selected common issues, leaving the option for other countries to join later, or for new integration issues to be added.

"For now, it is best to respond to the expressed desire of countries to cooperate on a limited number of promising areas first, and then build on these by gradually deepening and widening the scope of cooperation in the coming years," he said.

In addition, the ADB chief also made a pitch for what he called "subregional cooperation," which he said was the building block of regional integration, given Asia's extreme diversity and sheer size.

"Cooperation at the subregional level is only logical as a way to move forward," he said.

"As this develops, bridges naturally form across subregional boundaries, leading eventually to wider and more comprehensive cooperation and integration," he added.

All told, Asia has a combined population of 3.5 billion, a combined gross domestic product of $8 trillion annually.

Mindanao attracts investments in ICT

By Rizalene P. Acac
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—INVESTORS ARE starting to see the potential of Mindanao as a hub for information and communications technology (ICT) projects.

Teolulo Pasawa, chief of the National Economic Research and Business Assistance Center (Nerbac), cited as evidence the ongoing construction of the Damosa Information Technology Park project in Lanang village here.

The park, which is being developed by the Floirendo family, covers 22,983 square meters and will soon host two buildings.

Pasawa said the Philippine Export Processing Zone Authority (Peza) had already granted incentives to the park's developer.

These include the duty-free importation of capital goods and the freedom to hire foreign consultants.

Pasawa said the Link2Support call center had already signified interest to become the park's first locator.

The call center, he said, will have an initial manpower complement of 200 but will be expanded later to accommodate 1,000.

Aside from the Floirendo-owned ICT park, he said Robinson's Mall here had also committed to assign one floor for ICT development.

Pasawa said that while plans were still in the initial stages, the complex would be developed for firms engaged in business process outsourcing.

He said that the launching of many ICT-related courses in the city was also helping boost the sector.

Pasawa said last year saw the coming of medical transcription schools and locators and the formation of the Transcription Association of Davao Inc. (Tadi).

As this developed, the Philippine National Information Technology Standards (Philnits) announced during the recent first Techno-Kapihan sa PIA here its willingness to reopen an examination center in the city.

Philnits started a certification program in 2002, which aims to "improve individual technical competence and to indicate the levels of competence required for various fields of IT Engineers."

The program, supported by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry of Japan, already tested 3,308 individuals.

Only 342, however, have passed so far.

Philnits president Maria Corazon Akol said passers have an edge over other workers eyeing good jobs in the ICT industry.

"We need to develop our people to make us globally competitive," she said.

Cordillera explores packaging options

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS HERE said the establishment of a centralized packaging center for Cordillera products would help products grow their share of the export market.

Mt. Province Gov. Maximo Dalog, chair of the Regional Development Council in the Cordillera, said quality packaging was a good tool to promote local products.

Dalog cited the colorful labels and the bottling process of Mt. Province's "Lang-Ay Wine" and "Sagada Arabica Coffee."

These products would be advertised in the province's Lang-ay Festival in April.

Juan Ngalob, Cordillera director of National Economic and Development Authority, said local businessmen could lessen their reliance on expensive imported packaging materials with the establishment of the center.

He said the RDC was looking at putting up the center at the Benguet State University (BSU) in La Trinidad, Benguet.

Carmelita Usman, Benguet director of Department of Trade and Industry, said at least P100 million was needed to establish the center and package local products.

The DTI has also been helping local entrepreneurs and businessmen enhance the packaging and marketing of their products under the One Town One Product program, she said.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
KEPCO PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 18/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Bongjoo Choi	Manager, Contract Management Department
SUBTRONICS TRADING CORP. 1299 Luis St., San Miguel Pasig City	Choon Sub Park	General Manager
ROCHE (PHILIPPINES) INC. 2252 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Rolf Gerhard Ammelburg	Director, Vice President General Manager and Treasurer
UNREASONING CORPORATION 79 Green World Plaza, BF Homes, Parañaque City	Hye Jung Nam	Supervisor
OPTIMA PLANT SERVICE CORP. 2/F AC Raftel Center, 8193 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque City	Insung Hwang	Executive Vice President-Finance/ Treasurer
J.P. GLOBAL INVESTMENTS CORP. Unit C5 Virra I Cond., 500 P. Burgos St., Makati City	Byoung Geon Park	President
J.P. GLOBAL INVESTMENTS CORP. Unit C5 Virra I Cond., 500 P. Burgos St., Makati City	Jaeuk Lee	Vice-President
CERABEST HEALTH CORP. Unit 3 S-1 2/F 1328 Sunshine Plaza, Quezon Ave., Quezon City	Ji Yoon Kim	Assistant General Manager
MIII TECHNICAL SERVICES CORP. 25/F BPI Buendia Center, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Takashi Onishi	Technical Supervisor
NEW-FIELDS (ASIA-PACIFIC) INC. Unit 1603 Tektite East Tower, PSEC Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Samir Mansour Hussien Awad Farajallah	President and CEO
GREEN TEQ INTERNATIONAL INC. #109 C. De Venecia St., Mandaluyong City	Heesok Park (w/o Ko)	Assistant Manager
SYKES ASIA, INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Taesung Jung	Korean Client Support
SYKES ASIA, INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Seung Hyun Shin	Korean Client Support
SYKES ASIA, INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Sanghyun Baek	Korean Client Support
SYKES ASIA, INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jung Hwa Lee	Korean Client Support
SYKES ASIA, INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jeongho Noh	Korean Client Support
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Abraham Howard	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Barak Gazit	Chief Executive Officer
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yaniv Soroka	Payment Processing Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ornit Sheayngut	Payment Processing Staff
BAYVIEW TECHNOLOGIES, INC. 43/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Nicholas Steven Chlebeck	Marketing Associate
SL AGRITECH CORPORATION 2302 Sterling Place, Pasong Tamo Extension Makati City	Weijun Xu	Agronomist
HAUZEN TOUR & TRAVEL CORP. 4/F Core Town Bldg., 2822 Edsa Ext., Pasay City	Jong Whan Lee	Operations Manager
S-TECH LIMITED 28/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Dganit Avital-Cohen	Chief Operating Officer
SPIRAX SARCO PRIVATE LTD. GE Bldg., 2291 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Ian Mark Aplin	General Sales Manager
AMMEX I-SUPPORT CORPORATION 7/F The Pearl Bank Centre, 146 Valero St., Makati City	David Andrew Mc Rae	Senior Customer Service Manager and Corporate Trainer
ZIPANG GROUP, INC. 43/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Taisei Oyamori	Japanese Support Agent
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Siobhan Anne Mc Cusker	Payment Processing Staff

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

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(PDI - March 2, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig City

2nd Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance
TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting
12 February 2007, Monday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City, Metro Manila

Resolution No. 2007 – 08

(Page 1 of 2 pages)

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE PROVISIONAL ASSESSMENT FEES FOR HOUSEHOLD SERVICES NC II

WHEREAS, Section 8, paragraph 9 of Republic Act No. 7796 or the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994 empowers the TESDA Board to "exact reasonable fees and charges for such tests and training conducted and retain such earnings for its own use, subject to guidelines promulgated by the Authority."

WHEREAS, in the 46th TESDA Board Meeting held 19 May 2005 the TESDA Board members approved Board Resolution No. 2005-07 "The Adoption of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification System;

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification Systems provides that "Assessment fees shall be based on the cost of supplies and materials as well as administrative expenses including assessor's honoraria, power and utilities, depreciation and maintenance costs. Assessment Fees shall be subject to change to allow for any possible adjustments due to costs increases";

WHEREAS, in the 48th TESDA Board Meeting held 10 November 2005 the TESDA Board members approved Board Resolution No. 2005-18 "Approving the Provisional Assessment Fees by Qualification"; (45 qualifications) for a period of six (6) months subject to evaluation of its pilot implementation and submission of its findings and recommendations;

WHEREAS, in the 54th TESDA Board Meeting held 16 January 2007 the TESDA Board considered and approved BR No. 2007-02 "Approving the extension of provisional assessment fees for the forty five (45) Qualifications based on the previously approved BR No. 2005-18 for a period of six (6) months subject to review and evaluation;

WHEREAS, during the Second Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TESDA Board – TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting held on 12 February 2007 the members of the SSSD and Finance Committee – TESDA Board favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the Board the adjustment to the provisional assessment fee for Household Services NCII from Php1,000.00 to Php900.00 for performance assessment and P100.00 for portfolio assessment and P100.00 certification fee:

➤ **Performance assessment**	=	**PhP 900.00**
• Supplies & materials	–	Php 300.00
• Power, utilities, etc.	–	Php 100.00
• Assessors fee	–	Php 250.00
• Technical and Admin. Cost	–	Php 200.00
• Equipment depreciation	–	Php 50.00
➤ **Portfolio assessment**	=	**PhP 100.00**
• Assessors fee	–	Php 75.00
• Assessment Center	–	Php 25.00

➤ Certification fee of **PhP100.00** (both for performance and portfolio assessment)

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the amendments on the provisional assessment fees for Household Services NC II.

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copy of the resolution shall be disseminated to all concerned.

Adopted by Referendum this 12th day of February 2007

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:
(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary and Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI–March 1 & 2, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig City

2nd Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance
TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting
12 February 2007, Monday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City, Metro Manila

Resolution No. 2007 – 09

(Page 1 of 2 pages)

AMENDING TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD SERVICES NCII TO INCLUDE PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT AS METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR HS NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2005-10 Approving and Promulgating the Training Regulations for Household Services NCII was approved by the TESDA Board during the 46th TESDA Board Meeting which was held last 19 May 2005;

WHEREAS, TESDA recognizes and support, the principles of Competency-Based Training, Assessment and Certification and Recognition of Prior Learning;

WHEREAS, there is a need to support and address the issue that returning household service workers need not undergo the usual assessment process because of their accumulated experiences working overseas as household workers;

WHEREAS, with the inclusion of the portfolio method of assessment, experienced household workers would be able to facilitate and fast-track processing of their papers in the event of immediate hiring for employment;

WHEREAS, in order to establish acceptable and updated Training Regulations for Household Services NCII, an amendment to the Methods of Assessment under the Evidence Guide for all core units of competency is hereby made to include Portfolio Assessment;

WHEREAS, during the 2nd Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, the members of the SSSD and Finance Committee – TESDA Board favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the Board the amendment of Section 3 of BR No. 2005-10 of Training Regulations Household Services NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board approves the amendment of Training Regulations for Household Services NCII to include Portfolio assessment as a Method of Assessment for HS NCII;

BE IT RESOLVED FURTHER,

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copy of the resolution be published and disseminated to all concerned.

Adopted by Referendum this 12th day of February 2007

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary and Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI–March 1 & 2, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Pangasinan State University
2401 Lingayen, Pangasinan
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NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of the Pangasinan State University formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the **PANGASINAN STATE UNIVERSITY** is now open. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Dr. Patricio S. Faylon.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must be a Natural born Filipino citizen;
- A holder of an earned doctorate degree in any academic field relevant to the mission and mandate of the University;
- Must not be more than 60 years old at the time of application;
- Must have a proven track record as administrator for at least five (5) years preferably in the academe; and
- Morally upright and has no record of criminal, civil and/or administrative conviction.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, the applicants should make a full disclosure of all administrative, criminal, and/or civil cases filed in any court in the Philippines and are required to submit the following clearances:

- National Bureau of Investigation Clearance;
- Sandiganbayan Clearance;
- Civil Service Commission Clearance and/or Certificate of No Pending Administrative Case issued by the Administrative Officer of present employer;
- Certificate of no pending cases issued by the Court where he/she resides;
- Previous Employer's Clearance/s.

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with:

- Detailed Curriculum Vitae (under oath) and authenticated/certified supporting documents;
- The applicant's proposed Vision and Thrust for the University within a four-year period;
- Result of the Neuro-Psychiatric Examination accomplished by a competent physician of a government accredited Test Center;
- Medical Certificate of Physical Fitness issued by a government physician; and
- Under Oath CSC Form 212.

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit eight (8) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents on or before April 03, 2007 to:

MR. MARLON N. FABRICANTE
Executive Assistant IV
Office of Commissioner S. M. OCAMPO, JR.
CHED, 5/f, DAP Bldg., San Miguel Ave.,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 636-1690
Telefax No. (02) 636-1693

OR

MR. EMERITO J. URBANO
University/Board Secretary
Pangasinan State University
Lingayen, Pangasinan
Tel. No. (075) 542-6467
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Republic of the Philippines
National Historical Institute
T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Historical Institute (NHI), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

DESCRIPTION : Rescue Restoration of the Corregidor Historical Landmarks

LOCATION : Corregidor Island, Cavite

A. Middleside Barracks Ruin
Approved Budget : P 4,812,500.00
Bid Fee : P 2,000.00

B. Mile Long Barracks Ruin
Approved Budget : P 9,625,500.00
Bid Fee : P 4,000.00

SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS : March 22, 2007 10:00 A.M.

Interested parties are advised to submit Letter of Intent and photocopy of their Certificate of Registration of Business Name (with original for authentication) on March 9, 2007.

Eligibility Statement Forms shall be issued on March 9, 2007. Duly Accomplished Eligibility statements shall be submitted to the Chairman, NHI-BAC National Historical Institute, T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila on March 12, 2007.

Bid documents will be made available only to eligible bidders for issuance upon payment of a non-refundable fee at the BAC Secretariat upon presentation of the original Certificate of Eligibility.

Bid proposals shall be submitted in two (2) sealed brown envelopes with the name of the project to be bid and the name of the bidder in capital letters, addressed to the Chairman of the NHI Bids and Awards Committee, T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila. the "First Envelope" shall contain the accomplished Technical Statements. The "Second Envelope" shall contain the financial proposal.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bid/eligibility statements, to declare a failure of bidding if there is, among others, reason to suspect an evident collusion among bidders resulting in no competition, to waive any required formality in the bids received, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **JULIETA M. DIZON**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Feb. 26 & March 2, 2007)

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Engineer

- Graduate of Industrial Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering courses;
- Excellent communication
- Belong to top 20% of the graduating class.

Interested applicants may directly apply and / or submit their resume to the address indicated below:

Wistron InfoComm (Philippines), Corporation
Human Resources Department
#4 Rizal Hi-way corner Aim High Avenue
Subic Bay Industrial Park, Subic Bay Freeport Zone
Telephone No. (047) 252-77-40 ; Facsimile: (047) 2526223
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Computer Programmer m/f, local
Accountans, CPA m/f, local

All applicants must submit two (2) sets of resume, diploma, certifications, with 3 pcs. 2x2 colored photo.

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KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 507-508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex,
Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines
http://www.deped.gov.ph; deped_procurementservice@yahoo.com
Direct Line: 636-6543 / Telefax: 636-6542 Trunk Line: 632-1361 Locals: 2085-2115

SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

R.A. 9184 and its IRR-A and Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) Procurement Guidelines

The Department of Education - Procurement Service (DepED - PS) will hold a *Supplier Seminar on the Procurement Law, R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) and MDB Procurement Guidelines* on ***March 14-15, 2007*** from ***8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.*** at the ***Bulwagan ng Karunungan***, Rizal I Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City. This seminar aims to equip the participants with a working knowledge of the procurement law, as well as procurement guidelines under the International Funding Institutions (IFIs) and a clear understanding of the bidding documents with the end in view of increasing participation in the DepED procurement activities and lessen the number of failed bids.

Topics will include:

- General Guidelines on R A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A);
- MDB Procurement Guidelines; and
- Bidding Documents on goods and services, particularly on procurement of textbooks

Participants shall be limited to 65 persons. It shall be strictly on a *"First come, first serve"* basis. Confirmation may be made by submitting the **Confirmation Slip** available at the Procurement Service, 5th Floor Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City on or before March 7, 2007. *Registration is free.*

For inquiries, interested parties may contact Tel. Nos. (02) 636-6542 or 43; (02) 633-9343, look for Ms. Ma. Teresa Fulgar or Ms. Ruth Romano.

(Sgd.) AIDA N. CARPENTERO
Director III, PS

(PDI - March 2, 2007)

CALL POEA 722-1144 or 722-1155
24-HOUR HOTLINES

ASUNCION R. MARANAN

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on February 27, 2007 at the age of 94.

She is survived by brothers, **Jorge & Clarita** and **Bel & Alice Maranan**, nieces, nephews, grandnieces & grandnephews. They and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel C, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 3, 2007 at Alitagtag Cemetery, Alitagtag, Batangas after the 7:00 a.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Col. ALEJANDRO MUSNGI LUANSING (Ret. PA)

of Batangas, Batangas

peacefully joined his Creator on February 26, 2007
at the age of 89.

His children, ELLA (†), MANUEL, GALICANO, MARCIA & JOSE; his loving grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Ignatius Mortuary, Camp Aguinaldo Q.C.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 4, 2007
at exactly 12:00 high noon at
the Loyola Memorial Park Marikina.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Our Dearly Beloved

DRA. FELICITAS (Sis. Fely) RAMOS BUMANLAG

(Former Dentist - AFP Logistics Command, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.)

Peacefully joined her Creator on
February 25, 2007 at the age of 77.

Her body lies in state at Sto. Tomas, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

Interment will be tomorrow, March 3, 2007, 10:00 a.m. Bumanlag Private Cemetery, Sto. Tomas, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

BIENVENIDO "Dido" JOVEN VALDES

of Paco, Manila and Bacolor, Pampanga

peacefully joined his Creator at 8:52 pm, Wednesday, 28 February 2007, at the age of 85.

His bereaved wife, **Nena Pabalan**; children **Alex** and **Mayi**; daughters-in-law **Tina Castro** and **Lulu Casas**; grandchildren **Anton** and **Ginnie Castro**; **Miguel**, **Vicente** and **Regina Casas**;

brothers and sisters **Sr. Trinitas ICM (Carmeling)**, **Carlos, Sr. Nieves ICM (Hermy)** and **Jesus**; and sisters-in-law **Matilde Martin**, **Gertrudis Villanueva** and **Cynthia Ongpin** enjoin you to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains are at Chapel K, Loyola Memorial Park, Guadalupe, Makati. Cremation is at 1:00 pm, Saturday, 3rd of March 2007.

We design OBIT for free.

She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come.
She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her tongue is kindly counsel.
She watches the conduct of her household, and eats not her food in idleness.
Her children rise up and praise her; her husband too extols her:
"Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all."
Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

Proverbs 30:25-31

Norma Santonil Esguerra

Lovingly and peacefully joined her Creator
last Sunday, February 25, 2007 at the age of 77.

Her husband **Ric**,
Children **Heri** & *Baby Navarette*, **Jim**, **Nenette** & *Bhee Infante*, **Mon** & *Becky Santos*, **Fel**, & *Niza Santiago*, **Julius** & *Grem Dacayo*, **Ricky** & *Jecri Ramos*;

Grandchildren Richie & Daisy, Jon-jon & Marie, Aileen, Christian, Ashley, Isaiah & Nikki, Ivy, Ivory, Man-man, Digoy, Ren, Mark & Carla, Megan, Mabel, An-an, Rap-rap, Ram-ram; great grandchildren Alyana, Mariel, Kokoy, Akyssay, Tea, and Theo

Siblings Addie, Linda, Lovie, Tato, and Junior; in-laws, nephews, nieces, cousins & friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at their residence at Sta. Isabel, Kawit, Cavite. Interment will be on Sunday, March 4, 2007 at the Paradise Memorial Park in Kawit after the 2 pm Holy Mass at the Our Lady of Solitude Parish Church, Villa Canacao, Sta. Isabel, Kawit, Cavite.

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PHILIPPINE QUALITY AWARD RECOGNITION. The National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) recently became the first government owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) in the country to bag a Philippine Quality Award (PQA) recognition for commitment to quality management. Photo shown are TransCo Senior Vice President Jesusito H. Sulit (6th from left) and PQA Task Force officials led by HR Manager Jose B. Brillantes (holding trophy) received the award from Department of Trade and Industry Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez at the 9th Awards Ceremony at the Heritage Hotel Manila. At barely 4 years of existence, TransCo is also the youngest and possibly the largest organization to cop the coveted award. The PQA is the highest level of national recognition for exemplary performance of private and public organizations in the country.

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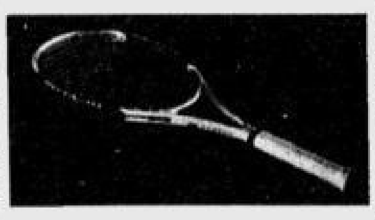
From rockets to racquets: Dunlop and the Nasa factor

THERE ARE TWO VERY accepted facts about the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa): the first being its dedication to widen man's knowledge with the exploration of space; and second, its selection of only the highest standard materials and the most advanced technologies to be used in its missions.

Dunlop, one of the world's leading sports equipment providers, now offers tennis and badminton players that same kind of Nasa dedication and cutting-edge technology to fulfill its mission: give athletes/players their best game ever.

Aerogel, recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records to be among the lightest yet strongest solids on Earth and used by Nasa in the Mars Pathfinder rover, and more recently, the Stardust Comet and Interstellar Dust Collection project, now brings its amazing properties to the all new Dunlop Aerogel tennis and badminton rackets.

So light, yet with a compression strength capable of supporting 4,000 times its own weight, Aerogel frames combined with M-Fil (Multi-Filament) or a combination of three materials built into the hitting zone of the racket for softening ball impact deliver a perfect balance between power and control.



In addition to this, with its unique microstructure and silicon dioxide component, Aerogel is both a powerful desiccant and insulator. As a desiccant, it rapidly absorbs any moisture on the fingertips when held, while as an insulator, it greatly negates most any kind of energy transfer be it thermal, electrical or acoustic.

Coupled with the vast array of high quality materials and racket designs used by Dunlop, the new racquet line promises tennis and badminton players maximum comfort without compromising performance.

"We take pride in how our tennis rackets have become the rackets of choice among top international tennis players such as Amelie Mauresmo, Tommy Haas, and Thomas Berdych," says Cecile Reyes, general manager of Dunlop Slazenger Philippines.

"Already our rackets, including that of the Aerogel line, have made appearances on courts at tournaments like the recently concluded Australian Open, the US Open and the Davis Cup," she further adds.

Winner of two Grand Slams and No.1 for majority of 2006, Amelie Mauresmo uses the spin-friendly Dunlop Aerogel 5Hundred Racquet while highest ranked German player Tommy Haas prefers the blend of power and control provided by Dunlop's M-Fil 300 Racket.

Other users of the Aerogel tennis rackets are Czech player Thomas Berdych (Aerogel 200) and Tommy Robredo (Aerogel 300) of Spain

With a wide selection of racket models made to match different playing levels and player needs to choose from, the new Dunlop Aerogel racquets not only raise the bar in racquet performance and playing comfort but also brings whole new levels of control and power to your game.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632)920-6401 • (632)920-6446
E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph • Website http://www.sss.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

IAEB No.2007-005-Goods

FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL (FTP) SERVERS

Supply, delivery and installation into operational state two (2) FTP Servers. Must include a 3-year Maintenance Service after the expiration of the Warranty Period.

1. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) intends to apply the sum of P3,900,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the acquisition of the above-mentioned FTP Servers, broken down as follows:

Item Description	Amount	Source of Fund
Item # 1 – Hardware & Software	P 3,000,000.00	CY 2007 Interim Budget for Hardware Requirements
Item # 2 – 3-Year Maintenance Service	P 900,000.00	Budget for Operating Expenditures – Maintenance & Repair of Computer Equipment
Grand total	P 3,900,000.00	

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The SSS now invites Bids from eligible bidders for the proposed acquisition of two (2) FTP Servers. Supply, delivery and installation into operational state of the GOODS are required within thirty (30) calendar days after contract signing/receipt of Purchase Order (PO). The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P2,500.00. The method of payment will be on a cash basis payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg., Ground floor, upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on 16 March 2007 at 2:30 p.m. at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Building on 30 March 2007 not later than 2:30 p.m. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be held at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City on 30 March 2007 at 2:30 p.m. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.
9. The ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bid and Awards Committee
The Secretariat
6th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel # 922-2991; 924-7380; 920-6401 local 5491
Email – bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number – (02) 924-7380

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI – March 2, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

INVITATION TO BID

The Government of the Philippines (GOP) through the Bids and Awards Committee for the Old Iloilo Airport (BAC-Old Iloilo Airport) invites interested proponents to participate in a public bidding for the approximately 54 hectares Old Iloilo Airport lot located in Mandurriao, Iloilo City.

Interested proponents may, at no cost, obtain the Terms of Reference for the Sale of the 54 Hectares Old Iloilo Airport, Mandurriao, Iloilo City (TOR) from the BAC-Old Iloilo Airport at the addresses indicated below beginning on 01 March 2007. After reviewing the TOR, proponents interested to participate in the bid must submit a Letter of Interest and purchase the bid package from the BAC-Iloilo Airport at a non-refundable fee of P 25,000.00 payable by check to the Department of Finance. The bid package includes forms of all documents required to participate in the bid, as well as detailed information about the Old Iloilo Airport.

BAC-Old Iloilo Airport-Manila
Department of Finance
5/F, DOF Bldg., BSP Complex
Roxas Blvd., Manila
Tel: (02) 524 1633
Fax: (02) 523 5143
Contact: James Chin

Iloilo City Hall
Plaza Libertad St., Iloilo City
Tel: (033) 337 5026
e-mail: banoymir@yahoo.com
Contact: Atty. Giovanni Alfonso Miraflores

Pre-bid conferences open to all interested parties will be held on the following dates and locations:

Date	Time	Location
13 March 2007 (Tuesday)	2:00 p.m.	City Budget Office Conference Room COA Building Plaza Libertad Street Iloilo City
15 March 2007 (Thursday)	2:00 p.m.	5/F DOF Building Department of Finance BSP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, cor. Pablo Ocampo Manila

The indicative timetable for the bid is as follows:

01-Mar-07	TOR and bid package available to all interested parties
13-Mar-07	Pre-bid conference – Iloilo
15-Mar-07	Pre-bid conference – Manila
27-Mar-07	Deadline for buying bid package
27-Mar-07	Deadline for submission of pre-qualification requirements and comments to transaction documents
03-Apr-07	Notification of eligibility to eligible bidders
10-Apr-07	Release of final transaction documents
24-Apr-07	Bid date
09-May-07	Target for issuance of Notice of Award
24-May-07	Target closing date

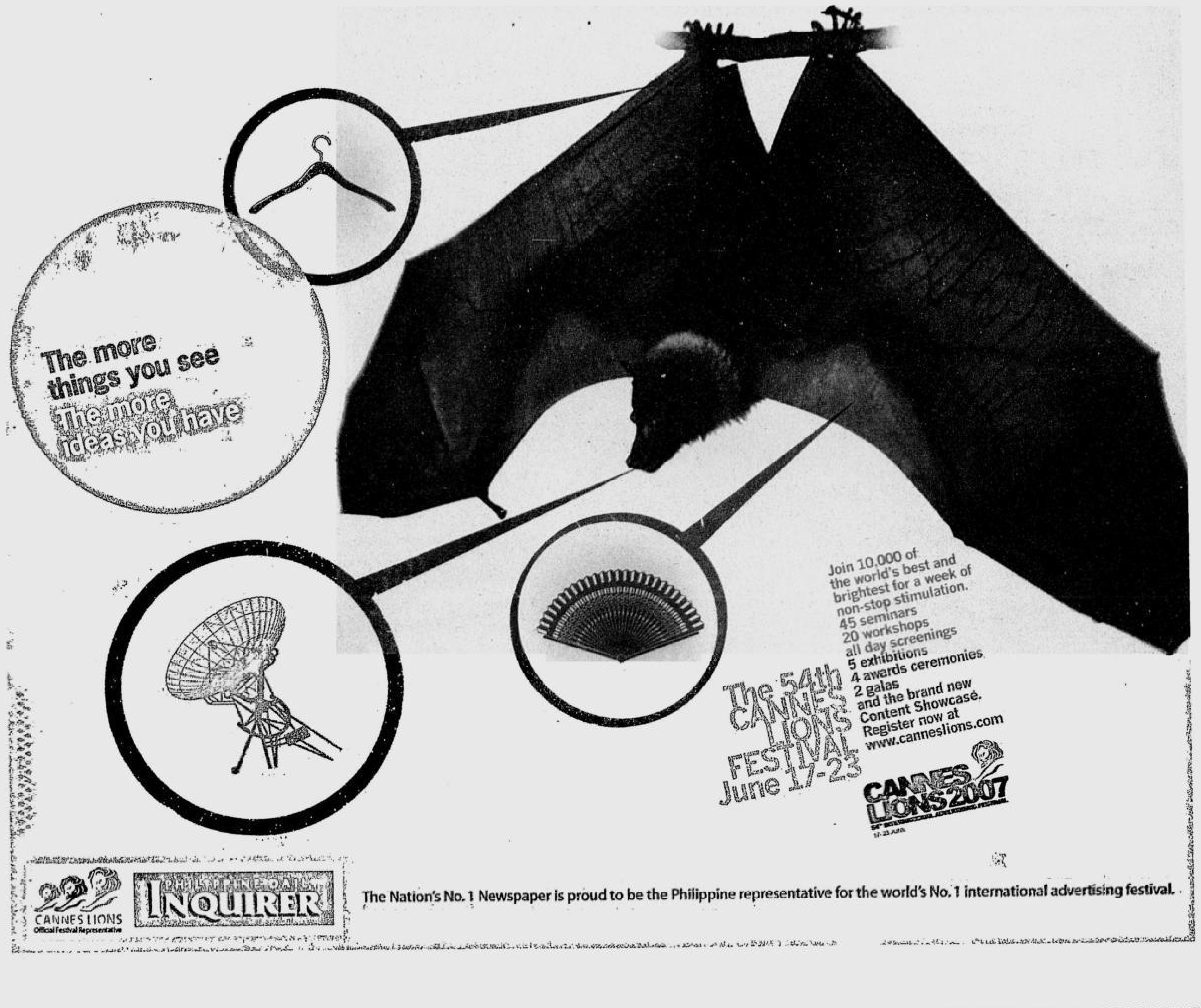
Any questions may be addressed to the BAC-Old Iloilo Airport - Manila at the address and/or telephone number indicated above.

(Sgd.) **John P. Sevilla**
BAC Chairman

(PDI– March 1, 2 & 5, 2007)

UNILAB CITED FOR ASSISTANCE TO DSWD

United Laboratories Inc (Unilab), the country's largest and leading pharmaceutical company, was recently awarded with a special citation by the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD)-National Capital Region for its continued support to the Sanctuary Center for Women in Mandaluyong City and the Haven for Women in Muntinlupa City. Unilab's assistance to these DSWD centers is part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitment to reach out to marginalized sectors of society. DSWD Secretary Esperanza Cabral (left), with DSWD-NCR Director Honorita Bayudan (center) hands the award to Unilab corporate affairs specialist Raymond Santiago during DSWD-NCR's 28th foundation day.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Via technology, top educators enhance learning experience

A TEACHER FROM BAGUIO CITY discovered a way for students to appreciate Shakespearean plays and relate the age-old tales to their own lives.

Warren Ambat, an English teacher from Baguio National High School-Main, encouraged his class to use the Internet to research about the famous playwright's works and writing style. As the students eventually grasped the meaning behind the literary work, Ambat instructed the students to produce a short film of a localized version of the story, which would reflect their communities' traditions and customs.

His inspiring efforts to introduce students to classic works through the use of information and communications technology (ICT) earned him an award as one of the top three winners of the Third Innovative Teachers Leadership Awards (Itla). The other two winners were Donald Dungog, a Math teacher from the Science and Technology Education Center in Lapu-Lapu City, who devised a way for his students to ask questions and share answers and ideas online, and Evelyn Waperi, who focused on improving the reading skills of her students from the Iligan City National High School.

The winners were announced in an awarding ceremony held recently, attended by representatives from different education groups.

Itla is a Microsoft Philippines Partners in Learning (PiL) program, implemented with the Department of Education (DepEd), that seeks to give Filipino educators the recognition they deserve for contributing to the improvement of the students' learning experience through the imaginative and efficient use of information and communications technology (ICT) in classroom teaching.

"Filipino teachers are some of the most dedicated educators in the world. We've heard heroic stories about our teachers and we have every reason to be proud of them," said Michelle Casio, academic programs manager, Microsoft Philippines. "The Itla program is about offering educators the training and access to resources that will enhance and complement their skills. More importantly though, we're forming a community of dedicated teachers, and this will enable them to share their unique ideas that make teaching and learning a different experience," she added.

Partners in Learning is a Microsoft global initiative for education, with localized and tailored programs that aim to enable teachers and students to achieve their full potential by providing greater access to the latest computer technologies and comprehensive ICT skills development and training for teachers on ICT integration into curriculum and learning.

10 Itla finalists were selected and flown to Manila. They participated in teambuilding and training seminars in preparation for the future activities they will undertake as ambassadors of PiL. The finalists were awarded medals in recognition of their achievement in teaching. In addition, the finalists also each received a desktop PC, web cam and headset that will enable them to continue their innovative practices upon their return.

DepEd Undersecretary Vilma Labrador expressed her congratulations to the winners and finalists. "All the teachers did a fine job, and all are deserving to be called truly innovative educators."

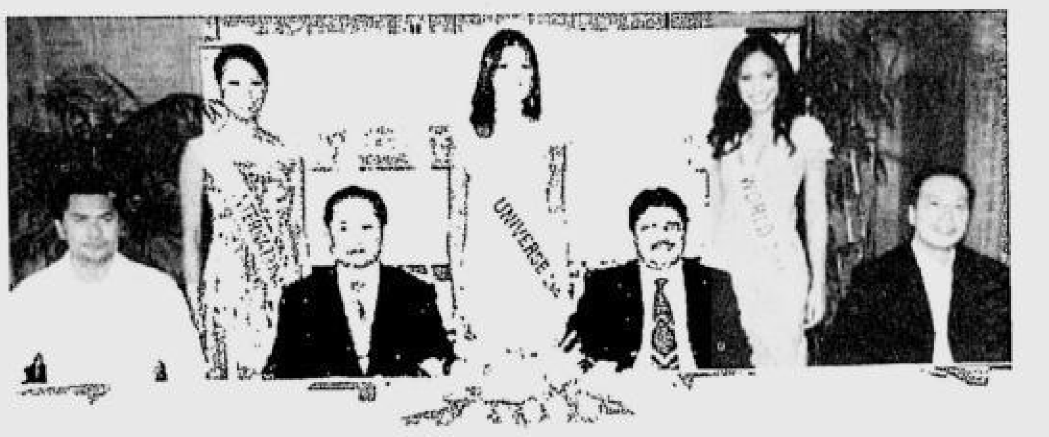
"Microsoft Philippines works to arm Filipino students with the resources and skills to be real world-class competitors. To achieve this, we work with the DepEd and teachers, because they are the ones in the frontline of delivering education. In Partners in Learning programs, we are engaging school officials and teachers intellectually, and we are inviting them to be active players in their profession," said Mark Yambot, corporate affairs director, Microsoft Philippines.

The first two Itla runs drew in 226 nominations from regions all over the Philippines. In 63 countries around the world, 476,254 teachers are participants in the Microsoft Innovative Teachers Programs.

Shown are the top three winners of the Third Itla posing with executives from Microsoft Philippines during the awarding ceremonies held recently. From left are Michelle Casio, academic programs manager, Microsoft Philippines, Donald Dungog from the Science and Technology Education Center in Lapu-Lapu City, Evelyn Waperi from Iligan City National High School, Warren Ambat from Baguio City National High School-Main, and Mark Yambot, corporate affairs director, Microsoft Philippines.

FILIPINO PHOTOGRAPHERS LEND A LENS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

A group of well-renowned seasoned photographers have given their time and talent in the last few months by photographing the beautiful scenic environment at the La Mesa Watershed. These photographers will be featured in an exhibit at the North Court of the Powerplant Mall in Rockwell Center from March 2 to 4 titled 'The Phases of La Mesa: A Photo Exhibit'. Along with the showcase is the formal launching of Bantay Kalikasan's new long-term public awareness campaign for the sustainability and continued protection of the reforested watershed of La Mesa, H2Hope. The photo exhibit is just one of the many fund raising and awareness projects lined up for H2Hope, which aims to get individuals and organizations involved in its cause. Shown during the H2hope photographers thanksgiving dinner with ABS-CBN Foundation managing director Gina Lopez (standing, 4th from left) at her house is (standing) National Artist Ben Cabrera, Jojo Guingona, Suky Lammoglia, Ralph Diaz, Andy Locsin, George Tapan, Denise Weldon, (seated, from left) Bantay Kalikasan board members Raqui Garcia and Marit Yuchenco, Metro society editor Raul Manzano, Isa Lorenzo, Mandy Navasero, Studio 58's Bengy Toda and Via Mare's Glenda Barretto.



WATSONS SUPPORTS SEARCH FOR BRIGHTEST FILIPINA BEAUTIES

Watsons Your Personal Store recently partnered with Bb. Pilipinas Charities for this year's most prestigious search for the fairest and brightest Filipinas who will represent the country in international beauty pageants abroad. At the recent signing of the agreement between Watsons and Bb. Pilipinas, Bobby Saneo, Watsons activation marketing manager says, 'We are happy to be part of the Bb. Pilipinas 2007 search because Watsons believes that Filipina women are among the most beautiful in the world and we are proud that we continually help women enjoy their lives more by making a positive difference in their health, looks and the way they feel.' The signing was attended and witnessed by executives from both companies and was graced by the reigning Bb. Pilipinas titlists who will be relinquishing their crowns on March 3. Watsons, with 167 outlets nationwide has become first choice when it comes to total beauty, personal care and hygiene. It is the personal store's battle-cry to make people look good, feel great and have fun so it is just fitting to have this partnership with Bb. Pilipinas and be the pageant's major presenter. Shown at the contract signing were: Bobby Saneo, Watsons activation marketing manager; Manuel Atacador of Bb. Pilipinas Charities; Krish Iyer, Watsons managing director and Robert Sun, Watsons trading director with the reigning Bb. Pilipinas queens: Denille Lou Valmonte, Bb. Pilipinas International; Lia Andrea Ramos, Bb. Pilipinas Universe and Anna Maris Igpit, Bb. Pilipinas World.

Goblet: the 'life of the party'

EATING AND CELEBRATING are part and parcel of the Filipino way of life. We always find a reason to meet up with family and friends. A daughter's coming out party, a wedding in the family, the eldest child graduating from college, or bunso's first birthday, are but some of the many social gatherings we look forward to. But hosting a party can be more than stressful. This is when a professional and qualified caterer can be extremely helpful.

How do you choose a caterer from among the many out there? By checking out the track record, that is. Goblet Catering Services was founded by Soledad Dizon, who actually took up medicine in college. But instead of pursuing the medical profession, she followed what she believed was her true calling. Her passion for food was what prompted her to go into the catering business and build what is now one of the most respected names in the industry. It continues to provide food and service according to the high standards for which it always strives. Counting among its clientele prominent personalities and large corporations, it has always been known for its culinary expertise and elegant presentations.

But what truly sets it apart is the highly personalized service. From the moment a customer makes that first call, down to the nitty-gritty details of preparation, the owners have a feel for what the proper arrangement for various functions may entail. "We take pride in the personal relationships we have built with our customers, some of whom have been loyal to us for more than 20 years." Now ably supported by youngest son Resty as head of operations, he is working doubly hard to earn the respect his mother received when she first started the company.

It offers a variety of packages to fit any occasion: lunch or dinner buffet menus, kiddie party, merienda cena, cocktail parties, wedding or debut packages.

While Goblet has thrived in this business largely through word-of-mouth and referrals by way of contented guests attending functions it has catered for, it is ready to embark on a more aggressive approach to promoting its services to be able to reach a wider market. Catch it at the 10th edition of Wedding Expo Philippines at the PICC on March 10 and 11. For more information, call Goblet at 681-2930, or log on to www.gobletcatering.com.

Water sampling expanded to 923 sites; safe drinking assured

THE MANILA WATER CO INC (MWC) HAS expanded the coverage of its water sampling and testing operations to include several towns in Rizal province within its service grid, thus assuring safe and potable water from faucets of homes of millions of residents in the East Zone of Metro Manila.

This gave rise to the recent creation, through Manila Water's initiative, of the Rizal Drinking Water Quality Monitoring Committee, a special inter-agency body tasked to assure the company's customers that only safe and potable water comes out of their faucets.

Manila Water supplies water to over 5.3 million residents of the Metro Manila East Zone consisting of 23 towns and cities, including Makati City and parts of Manila and Rizal.

The monitoring group's composition and function was patterned after its precursor, the Metro Manila Drinking Water Quality Monitoring Committee created much earlier by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Authority (MWSS), the state-run water facility servicing the metropolis prior to its privatization.

The quality water watchdog is headed by Dr. Gerardo Bayugo, DOH Region IV-A director, who also headed the MMDWQMC before his transfer to his current post.

Both monitoring teams are made up of experts from the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the MWSS and local government units.

The DOH-led water service watchdogs meet every month to evaluate results of the sampling tests and issue periodic reports on the quality of faucet water in Metro Manila and suburbs.

To demonstrate its determined bid to keep water safe for its customers, the MWC has identified 923 sampling points in its franchise area, including Antipolo City and the towns of Binangonan, San Mateo, Angono, Cainta, and Montalban in Rizal province.

Vicky Santos, manager of MWC's quality and regulation department, said four quality officers do the rounds of the sampling points on a daily basis to gather water samples which are eventually analyzed at the company's central laboratory.

Santos pointed out that the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water (PNSDW) mandated that there must be at least one sampling area for every 10,000 population.

The sampling points cover residential areas, low-income communities, commercial establishments and public institutions such as schools, hospitals and markets.

The test results will subsequently be validated by the MWSS and the concerned local government units to ensure compliance with PNSDW standards.

The MWC said that over the past 9 years, it has consistently registered 100 percent compliant with water quality standards set by the PNSDW, "exceeding strict requirements for physical, chemical and bacteriological characteristics."

In its latest report, the monitoring team said water from the faucets in Metro Manila's East Zone remained "of the same quality with adequate residual chlorine."

"In fact, there has been no major water contamination in the East Zone of Metro Manila since 1997," Santos stressed.

PNOC EDC holds 28th geothermal conference March 7 and 8

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP (PNOC EDC) IS HOLDING ITS 28TH geothermal conference on March 7 and 8 at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. The theme of this year's conference is "Moving on to a New Era of Power Generation." This year's conference will again gather geothermists from various countries to share experiences and exchange ideas concerning advances and technological innovations in all related fields of geothermal science and engineering. Participants will present technical papers on the following topics: geothermal exploration: geology, geochemistry, geophysics, and petrology; geothermal development: reservoir engineering, process and production chemistry and power plant operations. The two-day conference will also be preceded by a meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Geothermal Association which has more than 2000 members from 65 countries.

UP Vanguard to honor achievers

THE SEARCH IS ON FOR THIS year's UP Vanguard Oblation and UP Vanguard Achievement Awardees. The search committee is accepting nominations for awards candidates to be submitted to the UP Vanguard Secretariat at the UP Vanguard Building, Department of Military Science and Tactics (DMST), in Diliman, Quezon City. Every year, the fraternal organization bestows the UP Vanguard Oblation and Achievement Awards on members who have selflessly dedicated themselves to the country and its people and on those who have gained national prominence in their chosen fields of endeavor, thus enhancing the honor and prestige of UP Vanguard as the fraternal organization of the ROTC advance course graduates of the University of the Philippines. Recognition and awards will be given on March 3 on the occasion of 85th UP Vanguard homecoming and convention to be held at UP DMST, Diliman, Quezon City. For details, call Jenna Lyn Dela Rosa of the UP Vanguard secretariat at 920-6881 or 920-6891.

Phi Delta Alpha's 50th year

PREPARATIONS ARE UNDERWAY for the grand golden anniversary celebration of the UP Phi Delta Alpha Sorority. Alumnae members of the sorority will gather on March 3, 1 p.m., to discuss preparations for the golden anniversary which is set on July at Club Filipino. The meeting will be held at Sis Jenny Jacinto's residence in Greenhills, San Juan. Alumnae members can confirm their attendance with LC Karen Pagsolingan (0917-8565616), Sis Abby Salacata (0917-8860558) or with Sis Grace Jacinto-Ali (0917-8373887) through office number 362-4637 or 362-4415 at the Generosa R. Jacionto Law Firm. Phi Deltans can e-mail phidelta_alumnae@yahoo.com to get in touch with other sorority sisters.

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Teresita G. Puente (center) of San Rafael, Bulacan, receives an oversized automotive key from CDO senior manager Jonathan Bendicion and CDO brand manager Mabel de la Cruz during a turnover ceremony held in Valenzuela City. Puente won for herself a brand new Toyota Fortuner as top prize in the recently concluded 'CDO Give a Holiday Whole-Meat Ham, Win a Fortune' promo.

How Will Technology Expand Access to Finance?

Cutting-edge experiments in eight countries to seek answers

Hi-tech devices are already very much a part of poor people's lives. In Africa alone, the number of mobile phone subscribers has reached 155 million, having grown an astonishing 360 percent in three years. Yet, despite being connected to a vast, efficient communications network, most of the world's poor lack access to a more crucial system – a system of formal financial services.

One obstacle has traditionally been cost. The microtransactions poor people need are much more expensive than the large retail transactions that mainstream financial institutions typically manage. But new technologies may make it possible to reduce substantially the cost of serving some poor customers. This could make microfinance more attractive for mainstream banks, and could also generate competition for this market from new providers, including mobile telephone network operators and private technology companies.

As the lure of reaching an enormous untapped market – numbering an estimated three billion people – emerges, banks could well encounter stiff and unexpected competition to provide the very microfinance services they have conventionally deemed too expensive. New types of providers, including mobile network operators and private technology companies, are poised to start using technology to get in the game.

The challenges: Distance, demand and distrust

For poor people to bank effectively, they need to be able to access and deposit cash in villages and in slums. Yet the constraints to providing such basic and vital services are many. Bank branches, with their high costs and staffing requirements, are clearly not the solution. In many parts of the developing world, people are either too poor, or populations are too far dispersed to justify the cost of opening a typical bank branch, which often runs US$250,000 and up. In many rural areas, there simply is not enough demand to justify the expense when the volume of savings and the numbers of transactions are small.

Low levels of education and poor people's perceptions of bank culture pose additional obstacles. People who do not use formal financial services tend to trust informal mechanisms and those who operate them. Many are suspicious of banks, do not understand their terms and procedures, and feel out of place in a branch.

Looking to technology for a solution

These are just some of the reasons why many in the microfinance sector and beyond are looking for ways to bypass traditional branch infrastructure. The point is not that improving people's comfort with financial institutions is unimportant, nor that poor people do not deserve face-to-face banking; rather, the point is that we may be able to reach poor customers without waiting for those things to happen, thanks to modern information and communications technology.

Multiple technologies exist today that are likely to broaden access to formal financial services, including point-of-sale devices and mobile phones combined with banking agents, automatic teller machines (ATMs), and shared information system platforms.

Says Dan Schatt, Celent Senior Analyst and advisor to CGAP on technology, "Many of the conveniences we take for granted in the developed world, like the ability to receive and pay bills electronically, rest on sophisticated risk management and payment structures that have historically been irreplicable in emerging regions. However, the growth of internet and mobile usage, along with advances in biometric technologies, will begin to have a particularly profound impact on how individuals and households live their lives in the remotest of regions. Payment authentication and identity verification capabilities along with other core payment and banking technologies can now be leveraged to empower unbanked individuals to conduct their basic financial affairs and create a systemic contribution to emerging economies."

Yet we still know very little about how these technologies can be used to serve those without access, and despite the growing buzz, only a few financial institutions and technology companies are really trying to find out.

CGAP's new technology initiative

To start getting some answers about just how technology can feasibly deliver basic banking and other financial services to large numbers of poor people, CGAP has expanded its technology program with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Through this initiative, CGAP will identify, shape and nurture projects with microfinance practitioners, banks, telecommunications and technology firms, and others. Each project in this framework of global learning will help identify promising business models that overcome the constraints to financial access and achieve strong customer uptake. CGAP will also aim to understand the risks of these technology models and how regulators can respond in a way that promotes innovation while protecting consumers and the financial system.

Systematically transforming possibilities into reality

CGAP will continue to play an advisory role with these market players to be able to test new approaches across a wide variety of settings. In these partnerships, CGAP will be closely involved in every step of the way – from design and implementation to evaluation and knowledge sharing.

Ultimately, these new experiments will help identify profitable business models, determine how to balance technology with the "human touch" to meet poor people's needs, and test ways to make these approaches comfortable for non tech-savvy, or even illiterate customers. Leveraging its expertise, neutrality, network of contacts, and its role as a public good for the field, CGAP will aim to share its learning with the microfinance industry to expand the frontiers of access to finance.

Says CGAP Microfinance Analyst Hannah Siedek, "Everyone is thinking and talking about the potential of technology to break down many of the serious barriers to reaching poor and remote customers. We at CGAP want to help catalyze the process by conducting rigorous research and information sharing, and translating some of the ideas that are brewing around the globe into reality."

Supporting the pioneers

While the use of information and communications technologies has only just begun, CGAP has received an overwhelming initial response to its first call for project ideas. With more than 70 proposals submitted from 38 countries, there is clearly no lack of interest on the ground in playing the role of pioneer.

The nine initial projects selected for detailed planning push the envelope in a variety of ways. Hailing from three continents, their goals range from offering banking services through point-of-sale devices at retail outlets, to developing mobile banking networks in urban slums, to helping a central bank achieve universal access to finance; individual projects will aim to reach as many as two million people. For example:

- *Testing how mobile banking and agents can deliver a range of financial products to rural areas*

Equity Bank, a leading commercial bank in Kenya focused on the low-income market, will seek to expand its reach to rural areas through cell phones and small shops. While the bank is already home to roughly 12% of all bank accounts in Kenya and over one million depositors, its customers are primarily urban. As most of Kenya's poor people still live in rural areas, the institution will now experiment with a new low-cost delivery channel to provide a range of products to these customers, including savings, money transfers and even credit.

- *Testing how customers respond to different types of agents*

Te Creemos, a young microlending organization that works out of pharmacies across Mexico will try to expand its network in very low-income and rural areas in Chiapas using biometric fingerprint recognition systems and point-of-sale devices in a wider range of retail outlets, including supermarkets and gas stations. Its goal is to add nearly 200,000 new clients to the 40,000 it currently serves.

- *Testing whether low-income, unbanked people will accept "electronic wallets"*

In partnership with rural banks, the Philippines' second largest mobile carrier Globe Telecom, through its wholly-owned m-commerce subsidiary, G-Xchange, Inc., will offer banking services to poor Filipinos in outlying islands through their cell phones. Globe's G-Cash electronic wallet is already used by several hundred thousand people to send and receive money. It will now be expanded to reach at least 150,000 clients as a basic banking product.

Paving the way with favorable regulation

If these trail-blazers succeed, will rural shopkeepers become the world's predominant banking points and make bank branches obsolete? While this is hardly a rhetorical question, there remains another major impediment to forging these types of partnerships and proving that mobile banking can work even in the most remote areas: regulation.

"Ensuring regulatory compliance continues to be a core focus around strengthening our mobile banking services," says Ms. Rizza Maniego-Eala, President of G-Xchange,Inc. "From reassuring regulators that we weren't creating a new currency, we progressed to having our processes recently examined by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to ensure that we remain fully compliant not only with the Anti-Money Laundering rules and regulations but also with other remittance-related policies and procedures."

G-Xchange's experience echoes what mobile operators, banks and additional potential purveyors in other countries are saying: reaching the poor with mobile phone banking and other technologies is possible only with the right regulation. CGAP's technology program will focus on these policy concerns, to help regulators advance technology solutions.

Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) is a resource center for the microfinance industry, setting standards, offering technical and advisory services, training, and information on best practices, in addition to providing funding for innovative projects. Its 33 members – including bilateral, multilateral, and private donors – are committed to building more inclusive financial systems that work for the poor.

You can find out more about these and other CGAP initiatives at http://www.cgap.org/

CGAP
BUILDING FINANCIAL SYSTEMS FOR THE POOR

ADVT.

Local firms more bullish, BSP survey shows

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL BUSINESS SENTIMENT REMAINED bullish in the first quarter in anticipation of brisk sales during the run-up to the mid-term elections in May, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest business expectations survey.

Business optimism was also fueled by the country's improving economic fundamentals, robust consumer demand owing to strong inflows from overseas Filipino workers as well as the rollback in petroleum prices.

The BSP survey showed a big jump in the business sector's confidence index to 44.9 percent from 23.4 percent in the same quarter last year, but a decline by 4.5 percentage points compared to the index in the fourth quarter of 2006. This was consistent with findings of past surveys where a dip in business sentiment was observed right after the fourth quarter as consumers adjust their purchases after the Christmas season.

The first-quarter survey, conducted by the BSP from Jan. 15 to Feb. 16 among 1,078 top corporations from 17 regions nationwide, measured the overall confidence index by computing the difference between the percentage of firms that answered in the affirmative against those that replied in the negative.

Looking forward to the second quarter, the confidence index was even higher at 49.4 percent, the highest since the BSP started the business expectations survey in the second quarter of 2001.

The BSP's quarterly survey has so far been a good lead indicator on the country's domestic economic performance.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the forthcoming May polls were providing a favorable momentum to local businesses, benefiting printing presses, food providers, automotive and other equipment rentals and talent service providers.

"Business opportunities will be more robust before the elections but to us (monetary authorities), the expected pressure on inflation will not be there, precisely because there are limits to some of this spending and the Comelec (Commission on Elections) seems to be intent on enforcing these limits," Guinigundo said.

The improvement in economic fundamentals, as reflected by the decelerating inflation, strengthening peso, easing interest rates and improving government fiscal position, was also "something that will encourage them to produce more," Guinigundo said.

"That's why perceived capacity utilization is higher," he said.

For the survey, firms indicated that capacity use this quarter strengthened at 83.1 percent after remaining unchanged at around 75 percent in the previous years.

Respondents from the National Capital Region and outside were both optimistic on the current and next-quarter outlook.

The services sector indicated the highest confidence level at 68.5 percent. Subsectors such as financial institutions as well as hotels and restaurants were the most optimistic, with their indices climbing at 90.8 percent and 86.4 percent, respectively.

The survey showed that business executives were anticipating a stronger volume of business activity (at 22.6 percent) and higher total order book (at 17.1 percent).

The employment index for the next quarter continued to improve at 16.6 percent, with the bulk of job creation expected to be generated by the services sector.

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Gameplan brings league back to fighting form

Eala lists actions that created financial banner year for the PBA

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL Association (PBA) saw its financial banner year in 2006, with revenues increasing by P26 million to P183 million from P157 million in 2005.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala assumed the post at a time when drug issues, waning audience attendance, and controversies regarding player eligibility hounded the league. Television ratings were down and corporate sponsorships were at a painful minimum.

Reformat, new rules

Eala and his team formulated and implemented business and sports marketing strategies to pull the league out of the muddle.

"The first thing I did was draw up a 'Fourth Quarter Plan' which basically focused on the need to reformat the league in terms of the number of tournaments played and how to effectively tap into the Filipinos' passion for basketball," he explains.

Eala's marketing strategy included making major changes, which required that the league's original three-conference format be downscaled to two tournaments per year.

"I felt the conferences became too many and it cheapened the championships. Shifting to two-conference format also made the players play harder."

The new conference format also "made the public realize that they only have a few games to watch, making the games more important."

There were also changes in the rules of the game. "We changed the game philosophy from purely defensive to mainly offensive. These changes were geared towards giving the offensive players more opportunities to score."

Consequently, it renewed audience interest since scores were up and the games became more entertaining. "You would rather pay to see Mark Caguioa score 36 points than for him to score 12 or 15 points. You pay to see scoring," he expounds.

Biggest gamble

Another business strategy was substantial cuts on ticket prices. "We brought down our prices to P5 last year. It was the biggest gamble we took. My philosophy was 'bring the people in, let the skeptics sit up and pay attention to the PBA again' and maybe the sponsors will come back. True enough, we broke records last year," he enthuses.

The PBA likewise changed the schedule of the games, from 5:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. to accommodate the students. "When we brought down the prices and the time was adjusted, we saw groups of students coming to see the games. So effectively, while we lost a little bit of our revenue, we compensated for volume."

EALA

The challenge was getting the AB, female market and creating a "fresher" image.

Since the league is patronized by a predominantly male population largely from the C, D and E brackets, the PBA's challenge is in getting the upscale and as well as the female market.

"Our Torch Bearers' Program could be an effective tool to reach the AB market. The younger generation has the Junior PBA Program. We also have outreach programs like provincial and all-star games."

To give the league a young and fresh stance, Eala says they are capitalizing on the youth brigade of the PBA in trying to tap into the female market by creating programs that will enhance the popularity of players from the collegiate ranks which, obviously, has a big following from the female market.

The PBA has also created PBA Television, which now produces iPBA, a show biz-type, human-interest weekly program that caters to female viewers.

Future plans

"We're looking at adding more teams, two this year and two more the following year," Eala says. "As for iPBA, we're considering more shows that will build our content base, and hopefully, make more revenues from it." The PBA would also like to bring the games to more provinces and venues to reach out to more sports fans.

Long-term goals, meanwhile, include construction of the PBA Coliseum, its own television production unit, its own sports channel, and a regional tournament for basketball leagues across Asia. Plans are afoot to create a second PBA in the south. "It's really like franchising wherein the PBA is licensed to the south in the same concept that it is done in Manila," Eala explains.

Eala hopes that "eventually, merchandising will step in. Plus, maybe we can have some revenue coming from our PBA Television content. The idea is to sell all our content to independent networks and cable channels," he says.

Women hold credit cards better

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

MOVE OVER JACK, MAKE WAY FOR Jill.

This could very well be the line credit card firms are taking. The increase in the number of working women has created a very good market for plastic card holders.

Already a given that women shop more, women are also proving to be better credit payers.

Metrobank Card Corp. president Anne Young says she had a hard time convincing her management team to come up with a credit card for women. This is because a few years ago HSBC aggressively came out with its Red Card and AIG had its Dolce Vita.

But Young was confident Metrobank Card, a joint venture between Metrobank and ANZ Bank could still enter the market and succeed.

She asked her management team, "why are we different in a positive way." This, she followed with four questions—why do people want to work for us, what might be different for our customers, why would a business invest in us, why could the community trust us?

She had good answers for the four questions. "You can tell we have a lot of talent by just talking to the people on the phone; MCC has two shareholders—ANZ Bank and Metrobank—who invested in us because we're a good company; we have integrity with our customers so we make the conditions easy to understand."

ANNE YOUNG

With Anne's optimism behind them, the management team agreed to launch Femme despite the presence of strong players.

Young boasts that their Femme card is the fastest growing credit card in the market accumulating 100,000 cardholders in 12 months starting October 2005. Today it has about 140,000 cardholders.

WOMEN HOLD/ B2-2

START THEM YOUNG

Contest aims to create young business-minded Pinoys

By Doris C. Dumlao

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO TEACH ENtrepreneurship, especially if this could offer the Filipino youth a viable alternative to seeking greener pastures abroad.

This is the goal of "Teenpreneur Challenge" pioneered by The Entrepereneurs School of Asia (ESA) with the Go Negosyo movement, a competition that mobilized 19 high schools in Metro Manila for to come up with entrepereneurial ideas to help Gawad Kalinga communities.

"We gave the high schools students a crash course on basic entrepreneurial skills focusing on creativity, resourcefulness, and innovativeness. Similar to how we train our ESA students, we provided the high school students workshops and business games instead of plain lectures. This applied learning methodology is more effective for the youth of today," says ESA founder Vivienne Tan.

"We have been pushing entrepreneurship and we have succeeded in pushing it to the college level. But there is a missing link and the missing link really is the high school. If you ask a high school student what he wants to be, no one will tell you he wants to be an entrepreneur. It doesn't make sense in their mindset," ESA president Joel Santos says.

ESA
ENTREPRENEURS SCHOOL of ASIA

HIGH SCHOOL students improve on product made by Gawad Kalinga communities to make the goods more marketable.

"So we said, we have to address the missing link. In other countries, they start teaching entrepreneurship in the high school level. So we thought the best way to address this is to have an inter-high school entrepreneurial competition," Santos says.

Citing recent studies made with the Go Negosyo movement, Santos says even in Philippine cities where entrepreneurial culture is high, the propensity among the younger generations to choose this path is alarmingly declining.

"We're finding that even though the parents are entrepreneurs, particularly in Cebu, they're sending their kids to be nurses. They say it's difficult to run a business so they tell their children to take up nursing, go abroad and file an immigrant petition for them," Santos says.

"That kind of mentality, that's why we want to promote this in the high school level. You have to catch them before they

CONTEST AIMS/ B2-2

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Bringing a bit of French into a mall

VILMA MEDINA LIVED IN FRANCE FOR decades, enjoying the much touted French *joie de vie*.

"The French have so much passion in everything they do," she observes. "The best wine, warm companionship, great food, and throw in the best weather—they seem to enjoy life more than anyone else."

Vilma and her husband traveled a lot, spending summer weekends at their seaside chalet and the quaint city of Deauville in Normandy, and the fall and winter in the family home in the Lore Valley. "My husband was a connoisseur of good food, and he would follow the Michelin guide," she recalls. "We frequented the restaurants in the French countryside, Switzerland and Austria. We always thought of having a restaurant of our own one day."

When her husband passed away, Vilma poured a lot of passion into cooking. She continued cooking and hosting regular dinners for her children, grandchildren, and friends, but at the same time was thinking about her husband's dream to put up a restaurant.

That's how Pink Pepper at the Mall of Asia came about.

"I wanted to have a restaurant with an ocean view just like the seaside restaurants in Deauville and Trouville, France and the famous La Perla Du Lac in Switzerland," she says. "We had been searching for the right location for years, and when the Mall of Asia came into the picture, I did not think twice."

Pink Pepper is a tribute to the sweet and aromatic herb first found in Brazil and now an excellent ingredient in international cuisine. Shaped like a dried pink berry that looks like black pepper, it belongs to the cashew family, and is rare and expensive because of its high demand. "We use pink pepper extensively in our menu," she reveals. "It is a perfect complement to beef, lamb, chicken, fish, or salad."

Vilma modeled the interiors after a French restaurant-bistro, maximizing the use of limited space, and integrating privacy in its design. Artworks adorn the walls, giving it that distinct Parisian ambience. The ocean view veranda is popular among its customers.

Pink Pepper's house recipes all have Vilma's unique touches. Inspired by her Deauville seaside marketing experience where seafood is abundant and really fresh, she wakes up early in the morning to do the marketing and personally selecting the freshest vegetables, meat and seafood. She also takes a hands-on approach in supervising the kitchen and food preparations.

"We work hard to make dining at Pink Pepper a creative culinary experience for our customers," she says. "I also serve the customers, and so do my children when they are available. We take pride in providing service in a friendly and professional way—thanking them for their visit, listening to them, and discussing their feedback with our staff."

Pink Pepper is at the second floor of the Entertainment Building of the Mall of Asia.

VILMA Medina got her cafe inspiration from her seaside marketing experience in Deauville, France.

Women hold credit cards …

From page B2-1

MCC added features to the card that targeted women such as spa tieups and makeovers.

Alday says Femme cardholders use their credit cards for grocery purchase and gasoline.

The initial target was the 25 to 35 year old upper C to B women. But MCC first vice president Aloysius "Aloy" Alday Jr. says their base includes an older age group.

One advantage of MCC is having Metrobank as a shareholder. The firm tapped the bank's depositor base for new card holders.

To date MCC has 12 different types of credit cards. Young says they are moving towards debit cards more.

"It's easier to manage, you are more disciplined. This will replace the checkbook."

She says the beneficiaries of this would be the OFWs because "we learn to use the credit card without risk."

Debit card works like the current EPS system of BPI or Megalink and Bancnet where a card holder swipes his card to pay for goods. Unlike a credit card, the purchase is immediately paid for with money in the cardholder's account.

Young says with ANZ as an investor, they are able to get the best practices in the different countries all over the world.

The success of Femme has inspired other countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam to introduce female credit cards.

DAVE Po Villanueva, Anne Lopue, JP Anglo, Ruby Cruz, Eugne and Karen Tsai.

PHILIP LOYOLA

Portrait of Bacolod's young Tsinoy entrepreneurs

THE CENTER OF AN ACTIVE metropolitan lifestyle that combines youthful brassiness and old gentility, and the site of cultural and social festivities like the MassKara and now the BacoLaodiat, Bacolod is the place to be for young entrepreneurs.

With the recent holding of the Bacolaodiat, the street celebration of the Chinese New Year in Bacolod, last Feb. 23 and 24, the features section profiles some of the maverick young Tsinoy entrepreneurs, dyed-in-the-wool Bacolenos, who are contributing to the new lifestyle and progress of the city.

Herbal supplements

Ruby Cruz grew up in the farm of her father, a rice farmer in Bago, the rice bowl of Negros, where she is actively promoting "a gradual shift" to organic fertilizers and re-educating the farmers on environmentally friendly farming systems.

"Organic is the way to go," she says.

Ruby, the marketing manager of the fertilizer company upon which her father has built the family fortune, has proven herself more than capable for the job, like a son her parents never had.

She's persuaded the farmers to join her in her newest venture, the Ganoderma line of herbal supplements. As contract farmers they will be raising the other herbal ingredients that go into the formulation of ganoderma lucidum, the base for a variety of supplements to combat diseases, which her company processes and packages.

"Ganoderma lucidum," says Ruby, "is a polypore mushroom whose semi-magical healing properties have been attested to by the Chinese for hundreds of years." Once a rare specimen, it is now cultured in Japan and several other Asian countries. Ruby intends to bring down the prices of Ganoderma to barrio levels.

Native brewed coffee

Karen Tsai also grew up in her father Ben Lo's business, the Kape Mabuhay, which has been around since before the war, known for its bracing native brewed coffee. "When coffeeshops were sprouting all over Bacolod," says Karen, "friends kept asking me when I was going to open my own. And I told them, just wait."

She'd been educating herself on this business since she graduated from college in Ateneo; she went for training in Germany with her husband Eugene, and traveled to Asian cities to acquaint herself with the different coffees and teas and determining "what are best for us," meaning the Filipino taste.

She opened Kuppa in January last year on the site of the ancestral home and shop of Kape Mabuhay in the old shopping area north of downtown. Kuppa was an immediate sensation, the newest lifestyle place for a crowd that loves Kuppa's coffee, its cool modern ambience, and the integrity that Karen and Eugene bring into the business.

"We roast our own beans weekly," says Karen, "so you can be sure that what you drink is not more than 10 days old. And we only brew on demand, so you can also be sure that your coffee is not more than five minutes old."

Supermarkets

Christie Anne Lopue manages one of the five distinct corporations running the Lopue's chain of supermarkets and department stores, the business founded by her grandfather, Ben Lopue Sr., in 1945. She's bringing into it fresh new concepts for shoppers (recently, a Lopue's Values Store for wholesale and retail) and opening new branches (in the last three years in Sagay and Hinigaran).

And she's bristling with new strategies to confront the competition posed by SM Mall when it opens this March a few blocks away from Lopue's on San Sebastian street downtown. "We will be the hardest hit when it opens," admits Anne Lopue, "but we are ready." How? By further improving her pricing, offering easier credit terms, and making a stronger presence in the towns and cities outside of Bacolod, among others.

She adds: "We want to open business in places where we don't eat up the smaller stores, but instead complement and supplement them."

Computers

Dave Po Villanueva, whose anxious parents relocated to Hong Kong during the martial law years, was sent to study in Canada for his high school and college education and there stayed for 20 years, working in Vancouver for a chain of pet stores, among others.

In the early 1990s, he decided to return to Bacolod, set up a distributorship of the Dragon Fireworks covering Western Visayas. In 1999 he set up the Information Equipment Computers & Communication (IECC), now one of the top five computer stores in Bacolod with a service center for the major printer brands in the country. "Bacolod," he says, "holds great promise for new entrepreneurships."

Siomai and siopao

JP Anglo's family belongs to the Sarabia clan of optometrists and opticians, but he broke out from the mold and became a restaurateur, today the owner of Mai Pao on 6th & Lacson streets, set up three years ago, a small 60-seater place for yam chas like siomai and siopao (after which the restaurant is named) and his exquisite versions of traditional Chinese dishes with a hip attitude. One can't adequately describe his dishes; you have to experience them. It's not "fusion," JP says, a trend that he'd rather call "con-fusion."

Contest aims to create young business-minded Pinoys

From page B2-1

choose their course. I believe that nursing is good, but you can't have every good student become a nurse and leave the country," he says.

In this competition, each high school team was given a product made by a Gawad Kalinga community—as ash trays, rosaries, trash cans, floor mats, candleholders—and the challenge was to improve on these products and make them saleable. The improved products will be tested in the market this March 2-4 during a Teenpreneur Challenge-Gawad Kalinga Bazaar at the Music Hall of SM Mall of Asia.

It wasn't an easy task for their highschoolers. The products made by these GK communities did not sell well during previous bazaars.

"People would buy them as a donation. But it cannot be a livelihood project because it's not sustainable. Nobody is going to keep on buying it. So we said to GK, after that first initial run of trying to sell in Tiendesitas with my students, we have to induce new ideas here," Santos says.

"So that's why we thought of putting this whole Teenpreneur Challenge together," he notes. "Whatever ideas they have will be given to the GK community to improve it and fix it. So it's still the GK community that will make it. And after the improvement, we sell the product in Mall of Asia. And that's the test of the challenge."

The best performers among the first batch of Filipino teenpreneurs will be announced during an awarding ceremony with Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Saturday, March 3.

The different school teams were assigned mentors, entrepreneurs, to help them.

For instance, Philippine Science High School was assigned to sell gift boxes. Team leader Katrina Chan explains that instead of retailing these products, it may be possible to market them on a wholesale basis so that demand will be more stable instead of being held hostage by seasonality factors. The team believes most of the products should henceforth be made-to-order.

"Instead of selling it per box, maybe local companies would like to sell their product in them, maybe clothes or whatever. We'll put a GK brand to it to help it sell. Of course, the GK brand would add a twist to it to help it sell, for social awareness or something," Chan says.

As of press time, her team was toying with various concepts, like personalizing the gift boxes like a scrapbook to retail clients.

In another room at ESA complex in Libis, the San Beda team was conceptualizing a TV ad/promotional acvitity for their product assignment—a candle.

The 19 schools that participated were: Assumption College (San Lorenzo), Elizabeth Seton School, Immaculate Conception Academy, Immaculate Heart of Mary, International Christian Academy, Kostka School, Lourdes School of Quezon City, Makati Hope Christian Academy, Miriam College, O.B. Montessori, Philippine Science High School, Reedley International School, San Beda College, San Benildo Integrated School, St. Bridget School, St. Paul's College (Pasig), St. Paul's University (Quezon City), Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy and Xavier School.

How did the schools choose their represenatives? Santos says: "We told them find the ones who are resourceful, innovative, creative and who think out of the box. And they tried to look for that among the students. So these are not (necessarily from) their honors class or whatever."

Santos says ESA would henceforth spearhead the Teenpreneur Challenge each year and the next one would be on a nationwide basis and might already include public high schools.

"There are so many GK communities. You have about 500 GK communities and we are only tapping about 30 now," Santos says.

He says teenpreneurs from public schools could compete as well as those from the private schools.

"Ideas are free, it's not about capital," Santos says.

Milkin Corp. CEO Ricardo Cuna and Champ Reyes of Royal Caribbean, the mentors assigned to the San Beda team, say the Teenpreneur Challenge has been an exciting, fun and encouraging activity for these high schoolers.

Asked about the most important values the kids would learn from this competition, Cuna says: "It's more of the essence of starting something they don't know and ending up with something which came from scratch. In an hour's session, they do something from scratch."

Reyes says she first thought it would be difficult to mentor the group because they are still in high school and bustling with so many different ideas. But in the end, she was awed by their enthusiasm and their ability to hatch workable ideas.

"They guided themselves. Although we were their mentors, they have leadership," Reyes says.

"We didn't shoot down their ideas. We told them to hold on to their ideas, guided them and chose the ideas that are viable. We helped them develop it and asked them why and how they can develop it further," Reyes explains.

The main criterion for this competition, which is sponsored by taipan Lucio Tan's Tan Yan Kee Foundation and Dr. Roland Hortaleza's Splash Corp., is business improvement. But it doesn't mean that the team that sells the most in the Mall of Asia bazaar will automatically win.

"We take into account product improvement also. Because some of them may not sell in Mall of Asia because that's not the target market but we know that this is more saleable because of the features. Like, some of them can be sold through corporate clients. Mall of Asia is a good venue but it only caters to one set of market—the walk-in (buyers)," Reyes says.

Santos says the competition is in line with ESA's motto of being a school of "entrepreneurs for society."

"We don't believe that it is just about starting a business and making money. It has to be social entrepreneurship. If you're going to bring entrepreneurship to the high school (consciousness), it has to have a social dimension to it," he says.

"We believe entrepreneurship to be a tool to fight poverty. Used in the right way, it can create employment, create more opportunities and that is the kind of entrepreneurship that we try to advocate. And hopefully these students, after working with GK would realize their business skills are helping a community."

Sun business opportunity

SUN CELLULAR IS INTRODUCING A BUSINESS opportunity for those who want to earn extra income by being a Sun cellular prepaid retailer.

Sun Shops will accept retailer applications for Sun cellular's various prepaid products starting Feb. 7, 2007. Interested parties may visit the Sun Shops to register and buy retailer sales kits. A registered retailer is entitled to discounts for bulk purchases of prepaid products and sales and promo support.

To those who wish to earn fast by selling Sun cellular prepaid products, the Sun Shops are offering discounted starter retailer sales kits. Retailer sales kits normally priced at P627 may be bought for only P528. A retailer sales kit contains one Xpressload SIM, P500 retail value Xpressload Wallet, two Super Value SIMs and various merchandising support.

My product has...

From page B2-4

true with your premium segment's consumers. With sub-economy segments, the priority values are first with low, low price while quality is a secondary consideration. Some indication or endorsement from some known authority about a minimum quality level is enough for consumers in this segment. On the other hand, consumers in your premium segment place quality as first consideration while price is secondary.

These are opposing value systems. And if this is the true second marketing reality here, then your image of a "generics crowded market" is most likely more an imaginary fear.

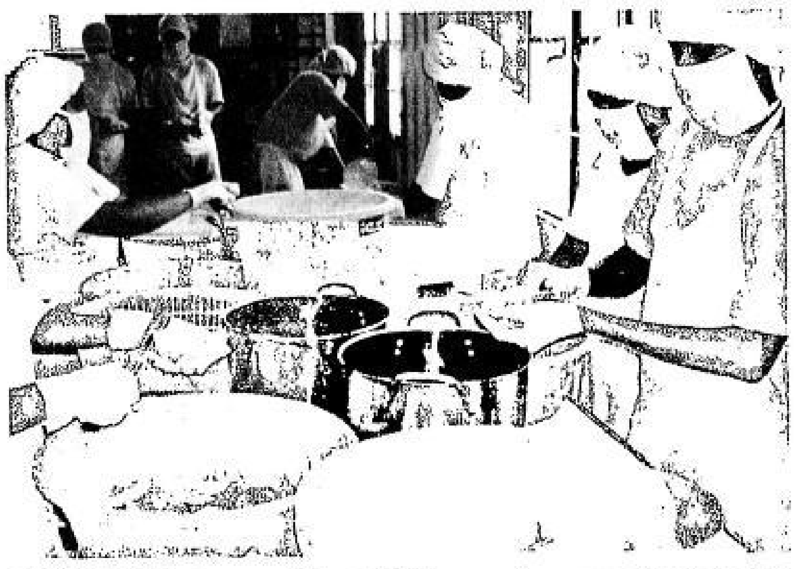
Our own market research consistently shows us that the price-driven market segment in the FMCGs is a low 15 percent (of the market) and a high of only 35 percent. That means the real crowd you're referring to (65 percent to 8 percent) is in the value- and non-price-driven market segment. So what do you have to do about this second market reality? Find out and measure your market's price segmentation.

To learn how to do this quickly and cost-effectively please read Chapter 14 of the Senior MRx-er's new User-Friendly Marketing Research (3rd ed.) available at the AIM Library or selected National Bookstore outlets.

E-mail us your questions to MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net . God bless!

Helping farmers get fair prices

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas



SOUTHERN Partners and Fair Trade Corp. workers preparing mangoes for processing.

CEBU CITY—UNTIL THE Southern Partners and Fair Trade Corp. (SPFTC) started operations in 1996, Cebu farmers who take care of 10 mango trees were at the mercy of middlemen who dictated the price of their produce. Now, the mango farmers in Cebu could get better price for their produce from SPFTC, which offers up to P3 more per kilo of mango, SPFTC managing director Gigi Labradores says.

Many of the mango farmers don't own their farms, she says, but an increase in the sales of their produce would also go toward an increase in their share of the sales.

Labradores says the SPFTC was set up to serve as the processing and trading facility of the people's organizations in the region. It also became the direct link between the region's producers and end-users, eliminating the middlemen.

Its first project involved providing support to the Cebu-Bohol Mango Farmers Association, a conglomeration of 23 member-organizations, Labradores says.

To support these organizations, the SPFTC chose mango, which is one of the region's major agricultural products, as its flagship product.

Mango processing

In 1998, the corporation did a product research and testing on the mango product and, a year later, it started processing mango in its Cebu processing plant.

"Our main market niche is the fair trade organizations in Europe, the United States and Japan," Labradores says. The fair trade network aims to help small scale producers, farmers attain a fair price for their produce.

At the start, the Cebu facility processed 500 kilos of mangoes daily but by the end of 2003, the production volume increased to 3,500 kilos daily after some improvements in the production system. With the improvement, the plant's efficiency reached over 100 percent, Labradores says.

However, the corporation faced difficulties in marketing its processed mango in Japan since the country's Food and Drug Administration did not issue any clearance for their product. This resulted in the recall of products and cancellation of the orders.

This is where the Canadian Executive Service Organization Business Advisory Program (Ceso-BAP), funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, came in. Oikocredit Foundation Philippines Inc., which partly funded SPFTC's production requirements, approached BAP and requested its assistance in quality assurance and control for the corporation's production facility.

"Ceso has helped us a lot. Their support is tangible in what they (expert advisers) taught us. These are now part of SPFTC," Labradores says.

Improving production

In March 2004, a Ceso-BAP expert adviser helped SPFTC by providing inputs on how to improve production through the development of an efficient quality control system and develop new products.

Labradores says the expert adviser trained the plant employees, most with low educational attainment, on good manufacturing practices. "Some only reached Grade 3 and very few reached high school," she adds.

With the Ceso-BAP assistance, she says the quality of the corporation's dried mango and mango puree improved. The corporation also developed new products such as mango jam, enhanced mango concentrates, pepper jam and dried ginger. During the mango off-season, the corporation processes other fruits such as papaya, pineapple and jackfruit.

After the company showed it could sustain the required quality and consistency of their products, SPFTC increased its market share while increasing the volume and product lines ordered.

At present, the company markets between 75 percent to 80 percent of their products abroad through their partner-buyers, two large cooperatives in Japan and several fair trade organizations in Italy and Belgium. SPFTC's sales also rose by 17 percent, from $143,500 in 2003 to $168,000 in 2004.

Another Ceso-BAP expert adviser helped the SPFTC develop its own hazard analysis and critical control points in production (HACCPP), which is required in some markets, Labradores says.

In 2006, the SPFTC sought again Ceso-BAP's assistance for the development of a marketing strategy to tap the North American market, with Canada as a priority target. The corporation also targets Germany and the rest of Europe as a potential market.

With BAP's assistance, Labradores says she went to Canada to become familiar with the market and to touch base with potential clients. SPFTC's participation in the Canadian National Exhibition enabled her to touch base with the specialty shops as well as look into the potential of developing a wider market base.

The corporation has set its sights on a more ambitious marketing strategy, Labradores says. Aside from tapping the fair trade network, she says the corporation plans to tap a broker or large distributor to access a wider market. To attain this goal, Ceso-BAP would conduct a full-blown market development project for the SPFTC to enable the corporation to access a larger market.

While the fair trade network helps link low-income producers with consumer markets, there is a need to develop a bigger market.

"We are trying to expand our production capacity so we could serve a larger market," Labradores says. The corporation invested over P300,000 in new equipment but they need more support from funding agencies since they could not finance the expansion on their own, she adds.

FARMERS have to carry their produce from their farms in the mountain to sell these in the lowland.

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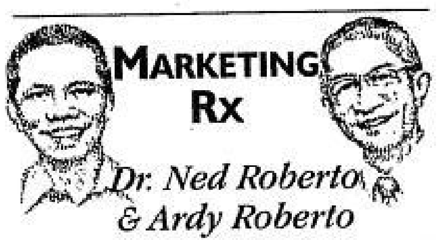
'My product has failed to take off after two years and I might lose my job!'



Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

Q: I NEED TO TAKE ACTION OR MY job is in danger. I'm in charge of a consumer product that has already been in the market for two years but has still failed to take off after the second year. What sales generating activity can you recommend I take? Help!

A: If your consumer product is a fast moving consumer good (FMCG), you probably formed an unrealistic expectation about "taking off" quickly just because you are a "fast moving" (FM) good. Those first two words do not refer to you nor your product in your current situation. FMCGs relate to consumer goods in general whose purchase cycle is just days or weeks in length as against those (like consumer durables) that are in quarters, semesters or even years.

Next, start learning benchmarking. Benchmark against brands in your category of FMCG. Find out their respective sales in their entry year, second year, and third year. Check which of these brands "took off" after their second year. You will see that NONE of them did.

AC Nielsen has the statistics for this. Over the past 15 or 20 years, all new FMCG product intros attained an entry market share of less than 10 percent with most in the less than 5 percent figure. There are only two that became exceptions: Rejoice and pHCare. So unless you can prove that you are another Rejoice or pHCare, you should rid yourself (and your boss) of that unrealistic expectation to take off just after two years. (Unless also you are a Blue Ocean Strategy kind of product like C2 Green Tea drink—as discussed by our guest columnist, Josiah Go, last week.)

To learn how to predict your turning point year or what you called your take-off year, watch your growth rate. Having just two years behind you means you just have one growth rate coming from the second year sales versus the first year sales. You need another year to have two growth rates that you can then compare. The second growth rate is from your third year sales versus your second year sales.

If, for example, your second growth rate is double your first growth rate, then you can feel confident that if your third growth rate (from your fourth year sales versus your third year sales) is again double the second, you're into take-off. If you want a more accurate method of forecasting, you might refer to and use some of the available forecasting software. You'll find that you can fit a second degree polynomial sales curve (like the shape of the typical product life cycle) with just 3 data points (that is, 3 sales figures from your first, second and third year). In fact, you can fit a concave sales curve with only 2 data points corresponding to your first and second year sales figures. If you wish to get deeper into this subject and appreciate possibilities, you might want to read the book, Marketing Models by Gary Lilien, Philip Kotler and K. Sridhar Moorthy.

Let your boss read this column to temper his expectations of your brand's performance. Worse comes to worst, then you'll have to start sending out your resume.

Decreasing trial buyers

Q: In one of your marketing seminars, you mentioned that your new product intro will succeed if over time, its repeat buyers become a multiple of its first-time or trial buyers. That means that over that same period, the percentage of first-time buyers will be decreasing.

Doesn't that mean we are having less and less consumers trying our product when trial purchases are our source of repeat buyers? That's a scary proposition.

A: The key to understanding the insight in this new product success principle is for you to think of your total number of consumers in your target market segment. Once your mind is clear about this, then consider two marketing concepts.

First of all, your first-time buyers are exhaustible. For simplicity, let's say you have 10,000 consumers in your target segment. If 100 of them buy for the first time everyday, then in 100 days or 3.3 months there will be no more first-time buyers to talk about. They have not only been "decreasing and decreasing" over time but they're gone! Will you consider that bad because you will have no more "source of repeat buyers?"

But you know quite well that after you've exhausted your population of first-time buyers, your source of repeat buyers have not been exhausted. That's only true with your first repeat buyers.

Your second repeat buyers will come from the first repeat; and the third, from the second; and the fourth, from the third; and so on and so forth. This is the market reality on which the second marketing concept you should keep in mind is founded. That's why it says: "Ultimate marketing success is a function of repeat purchases and not trial purchases."

Why is that an immutable marketing law? As you can see from the preceding, your first time or trial buyers are exhaustible; your repeat buyers are not. That's true of course, only if your product continues to resonate its target consumers' priority product values and needs. The moment it no longer does, then it's doomed.

New generic brand

Q: We plan to introduce a new brand in a market crowded with generics. Although our brand has the same molecule ("active ingredient") as the generics, its quality and formulation are better. So, we plan to price it much higher than competition. Do you think our brand with its premium price will succeed in this generic crowded market?

A: There are two critical market realities that you have to first ascertain and understand. Let's start with the easy one. The first has to do with the market "truth" of your claim that your brand, although having "the same molecule as the generics," has better "quality and formulation." This should not just be you as the marketer or your product development people talking. It is critical that this is also the research-based judgment of your consumers especially those in your primary target market segment. If you don't have this consumer feedback, then product test your brand specifically for this validation.

The second market reality for you to consider is the price segmentation of your market. There's a market segment for low-priced generics and it's different from the market segment for a higher-priced brand in the same product category. Actually, there are two segments for generics: One for the unbranded generics (which is the true generics), and the other for the branded generics (which is a contradiction in terms but is available like, for example, RiteMed). The unbranded is really low, low priced while the branded generics is at a higher price sometimes almost approaching the branded.

Let's assume that you're talking about the unbranded generics. The extreme situation that this defines in relation to your question makes it easier to give a clear answer to your question. This is going to be the case if your quality and formulation superiority is a consumer reality and not just according to your own perception or claim. In such a case, the generics belongs to a sub-economy segment while you belong to a premium segment.

Try getting a celebrity endorser.

Consumers in the sub-economy segment, by definition, have priority product values different if not diametrically opposite those

MY PRODUCT/ B2-3

A Blossoming Future
VISTA VERDE VILLAGE
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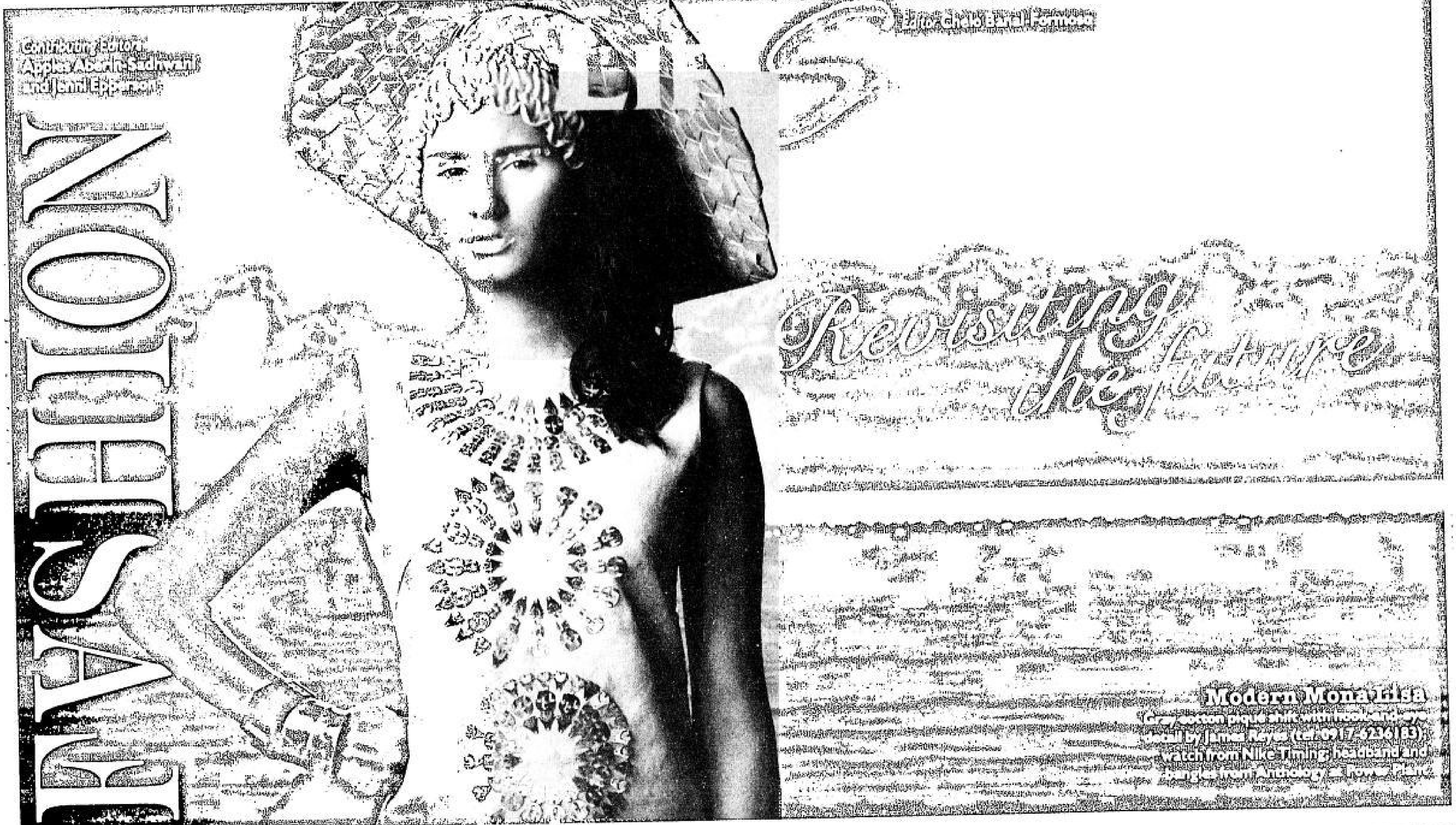
Contributing Editors Apples Aberin-Sadhwani and Jenni Epperson
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

FASHION



Revisiting the future

Modern Mona Lisa
Gray cotton pique shirt with hood and [illegible] detail by James Reyes (tel. 0917-6236183); watch from Nike Timing; headband and bangles from Anthology [illegible] Power Plant.

Coron chronicles

It takes much more than just the click of a camera to take stunning fashion images

By Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

THERE IS A GENERAL IMpression that denizens of the fashion industry lead glamorous, charmed lives. This is probably because everyone sees only the end products in the form of strikingly flawless (not to mention Photoshopped) images of gorgeous models in exotic locales, dressed in expensive designer clothes.

Unbelievable as it may seem, a lot of hard work goes into the production of any photo shoot or fashion editorial. Although there are undeniably a number of perks like travel and adventure, it is never as easy as it appears. A photo shoot involves not just the model and photographer but a whole team of skilled and very creative professionals.

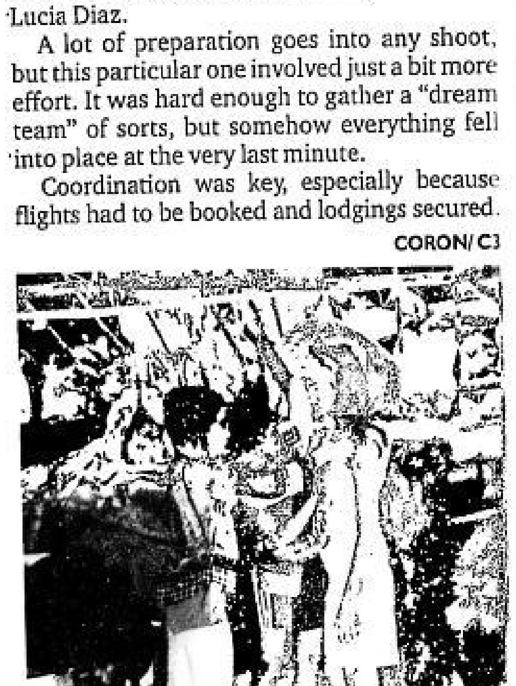
LOURD Ramos tames a stray hair back in place.

Case in point: INQUIRER Fashion's three-day Palawan sojourn, a shoot of epic proportions set in picturesque Coron, that involved fashion stalwarts like photographer Jun de Leon; stylist Millet Arzaga; styling assistant Mary Audrey Salazar; makeup artist Lourd Ramos; writers Genea and Gem Padilla; photographer Hans Villarica; photographer's assistants Aldrin Convocar and Ramon Ty; and models Amy Verbo and Lucia Diaz.

A lot of preparation goes into any shoot, but this particular one involved just a bit more effort. It was hard enough to gather a "dream team" of sorts, but somehow everything fell into place at the very last minute.

Coordination was key, especially because flights had to be booked and lodgings secured.

CORON/ C3



STYLISTS Millet Arzaga and Audrey Salazar at work

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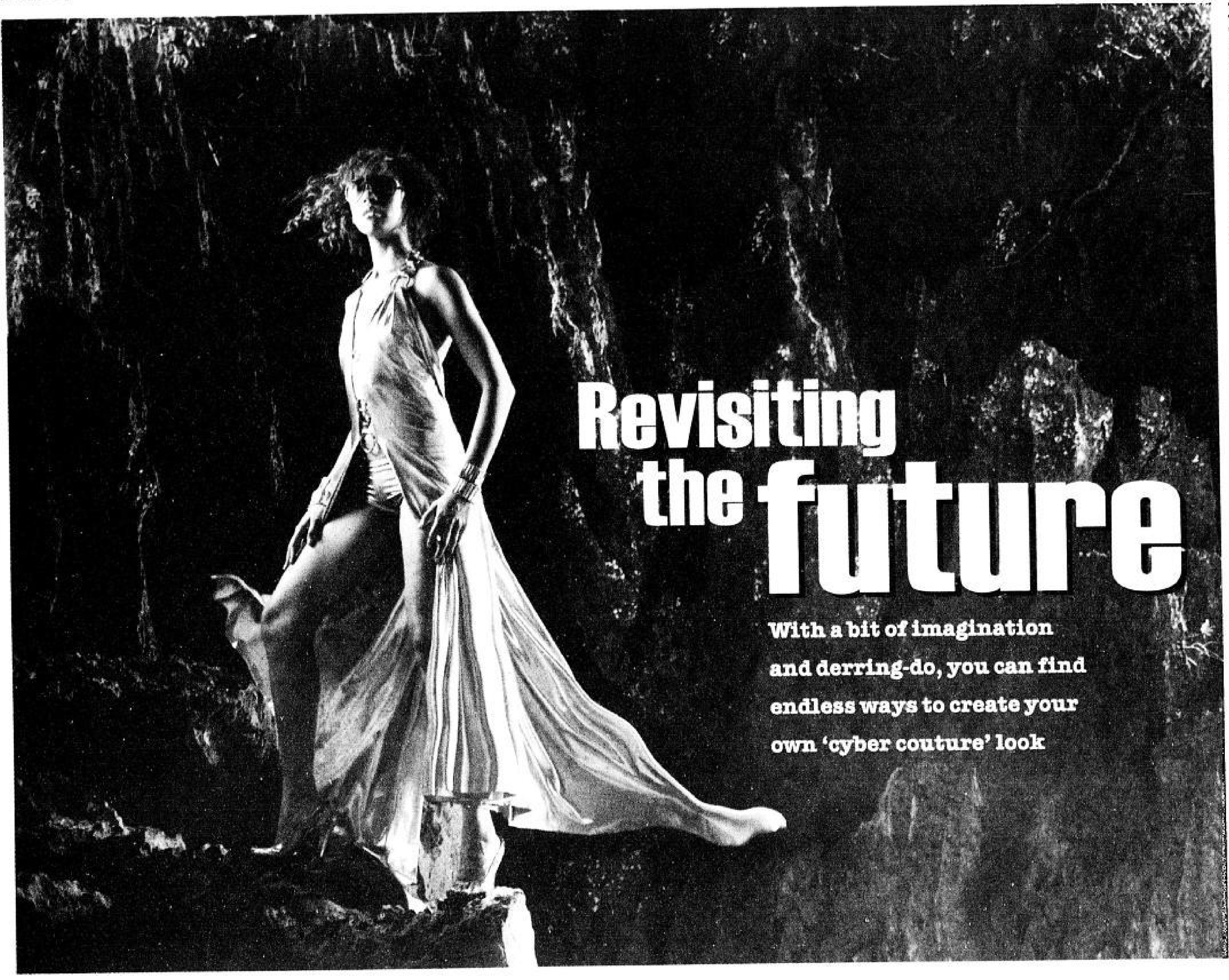


Revisiting the future

With a bit of imagination and derring-do, you can find endless ways to create your own 'cyber couture' look

Hero
Gold lamé halter dress and shorts by Raoul Ramirez (tel. 0917-9996714); bangles from Anthology at Power Plant; studded eyewear from Gucci Eyewear (exclusively distributed by Newtrends Intl. Corp.)

Photography
Jun De Leon
using Phase One
Digital Back
Styling
Millet V. Arzaga
Hair and makeup
Lourd Ramos
of Emphasis Salon
using Air Tan
by Model Co. and
Smashbox Cosmetics,
available
at Beauty Bar
Models Lucia D.
(www.chameleonintl.com)
and Amy Verbo
QuickTan Airbrush
Tanning
(for model Amy)
by Belo Medical
Center, The Podium;
contact lenses from
Fresh Look
Color Blends;
nail polish from
Caronia; moisturizers
from Jergens.
Shot on location
at Banol beach,
Coron, Palawan

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Special thanks
to Gov. Joel Reyes
of Palawan,
Mayor Marjo Reyes
of Coron,
Counselor Jim Pe,
Louie Cruz, South
East Asian Airlines
(Seair), Patrick Tan
and Pia de Villa
of Seair, Sea Dive,
Club Paradise

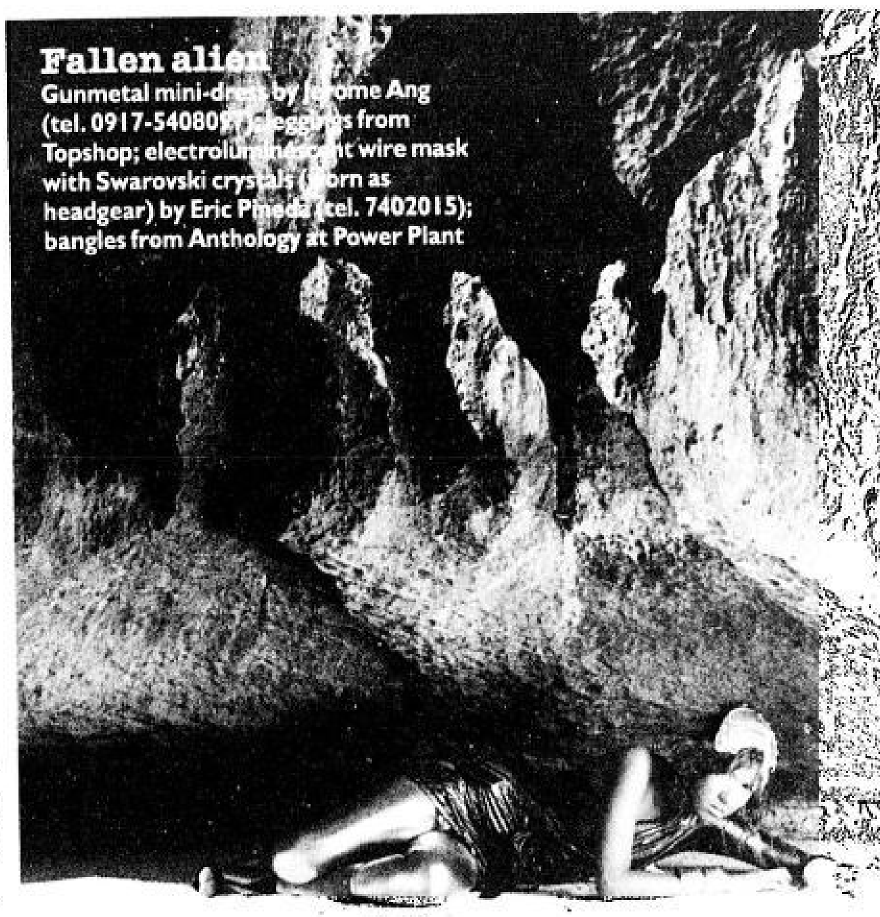
THERE IS A CHANGING mood in fashion this season. After a year of retrospective collections and charming, romantic prints, designers are suddenly revisiting the future in what could be an attempt to keep up with an increasingly technologically savvy world.

Plexiglass runways around the world were rife with robo-warriors and space-age superheroes in shiny, sometimes hard-edged gear, and the staple little silver dress.

Nicolas Ghesquière headed the pack of futurists with his armoured, "Tron"-inspired collection. John Galliano constructed steely jackets and dresses with chain detailing to channel inter-galactic heroines, while Hussein Chalayan created mechanical dresses that had lives of their own.

Homegrown designers like James Reyes, Jerome Ang, Raoul Ramirez, Jon Fernando and Garimon Roferos also used cyber elements and accents such as silver hardware, and slippery metallized satin to realize their own visions of the fashion future. Like alchemists or mad scientists, these designers cleverly fashioned silver or gold into futuristic but decidedly feminine pieces.

You need not get literal when jumping into this trend bandwagon. Embracing the future does not translate to exaggerated silhouettes or a head-to-foot sci-fi getup. You don't have to blaze a trail in full-on armor to keep up. Bear in mind that what you see on the runways or on these pages are showpieces that are super styled for visual impact.



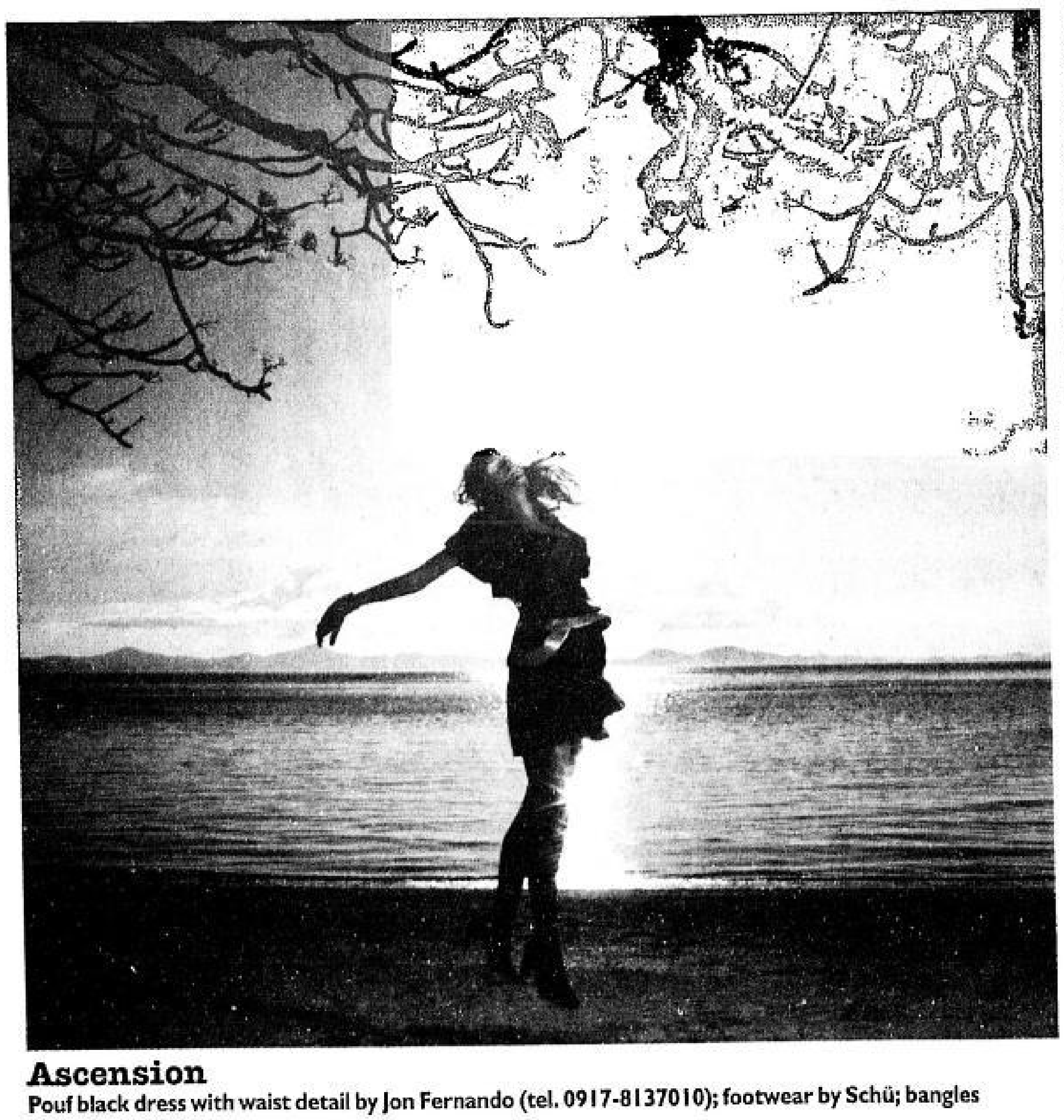
Fallen alien
Gunmetal mini-dress by Jerome Ang (tel. 0917-54080[illegible]); leggings from Topshop; electroluminescent wire mask with Swarovski crystals (worn as headgear) by Eric Pineda (tel. 7402015); bangles from Anthology at Power Plant

The key to effectively adapting the trend is in creating more relaxed versions of potentially android-like fashions. Combine wardrobe staples like skinny jeans or stovepipe pants with a silvery structured top. Or choose easy pieces like tunics with vinyl piping or subtle chain details.

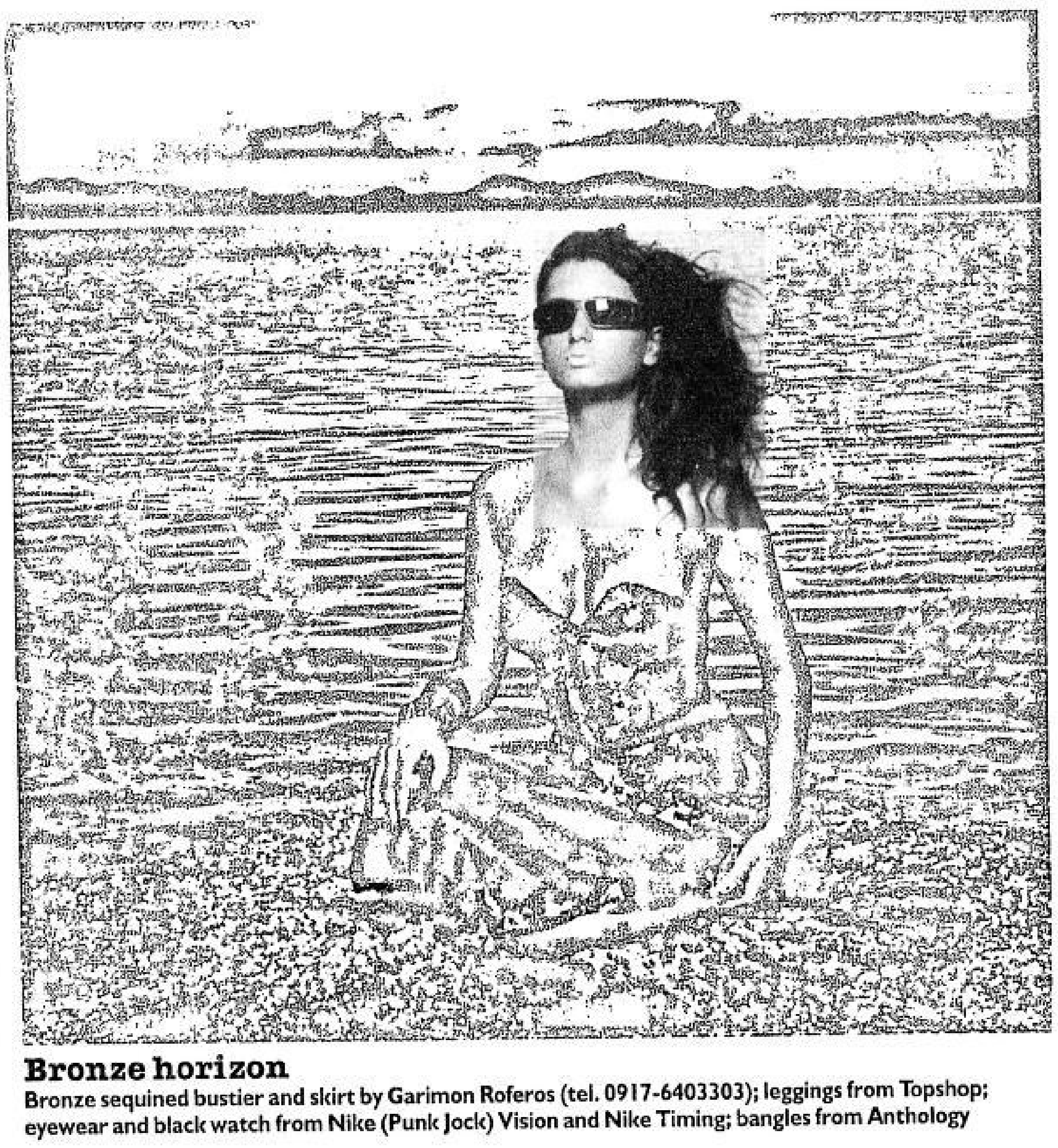
Accessories are also a fail-safe way to latch on to futuristic fashions. Go for cyber-inspired platforms, or metallic bags made of high-tech foils or plastics. If budget is not an issue and you can get into what promises to be a long waiting list, Balenciaga sunglasses are definite must-haves. If not, it will surely take no more than a few months for retail brands to come up with acceptable and more affordable mutations.

With a bit of imagination and derring-do—and a touch of humor, too—you'll surely find endless ways to create your own cyber couture look. So, get ready! The countdown to fashion's futuristic mood starts now.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph



Ascension
Pouf black dress with waist detail by Jon Fernando (tel. 0917-8137010); footwear by Schü; bangles from Anthology



Bronze horizon
Bronze sequined bustier and skirt by Garimon Roferos (tel. 0917-6403303); leggings from Topshop; eyewear and black watch from Nike (Punk Jock) Vision and Nike Timing; bangles from Anthology

Coron chronicles

CORON is the perfect ven
for INQUIRER Fashion
edition

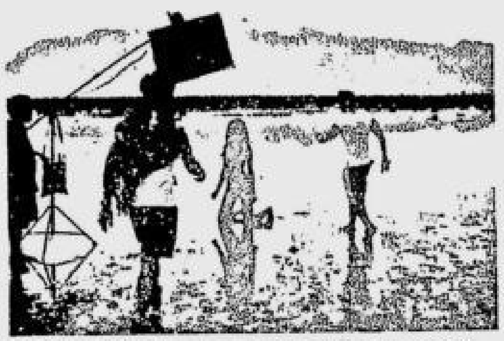
From page C1

If not for Millet and Louie Cruz's patience and perseverance; Mayor Marjo Reyes' generosity; and Seair's Patrick Tan and Pia de Villa's much needed assistance, this trip would never have materialized.

Before the trip, stylist Millet made sure that the group had everything it needed to shoot two fashion editorials for INQUIRER Fashion plus a travelogue for Lifestyle. She had a usually fair-skinned Amy Verbo undergo a QuickTan airbrush tanning session with the Belo Medical Center in order to achieve an exotic, island-girl look.

She also found suppliers for colored contact lenses (thank you, Fresh Look!). And during the shoots, she even lugged around a pop tent (among her many other styling paraphernalia) so models could easily change from one outfit to the next.

The others were no less professional. Models Amy and Lucia climbed rocks, perched and writhed on mangroves and pebbles and held impossible poses while makeup artist Lourd made sure their hair was in place and their makeup intact.



CAPTURING that picture-perfect moment at CYC beach

LOURD touches up Amy's makeup before another take.

MODELS Amy Verbo and Lucia Diaz all made up and ready to pose at 4 a.m.

Jun used (or rather risked) ultra-expensive equipment while he shot on the water, while Hans Villarica toted his camera while climbing precariously over rocks.

Even though the team barely had three or four hours of sleep every night after working under the scorching sun all day, and was out in the pitch-black ocean headed for various islands by 4 a.m. each day, everyone came on time, never complained and worked with a sparkling sense of humor that was the perfect salve to fatigue, sunburn and seasickness.

Needless to say, Coron was the perfect venue for INQUIRER Fashion's summer-theme editorials. The magnificent limestone cliffs, the clear turquoise waters and the white sandy beaches were all awe-inspiring. Sunrise and sunset were much-awaited, and even the dead of night was a welcome treat as the heavens lit up with a burst of bright, twinkling stars.

But ultimately, it takes much more than just the click of a camera to take stunning images. In the end, a well-oiled, hard-working team blessed with professionalism, passion and heart is truly what it takes.

Then again, it also helps to have a backdrop as breathtaking as Coron.

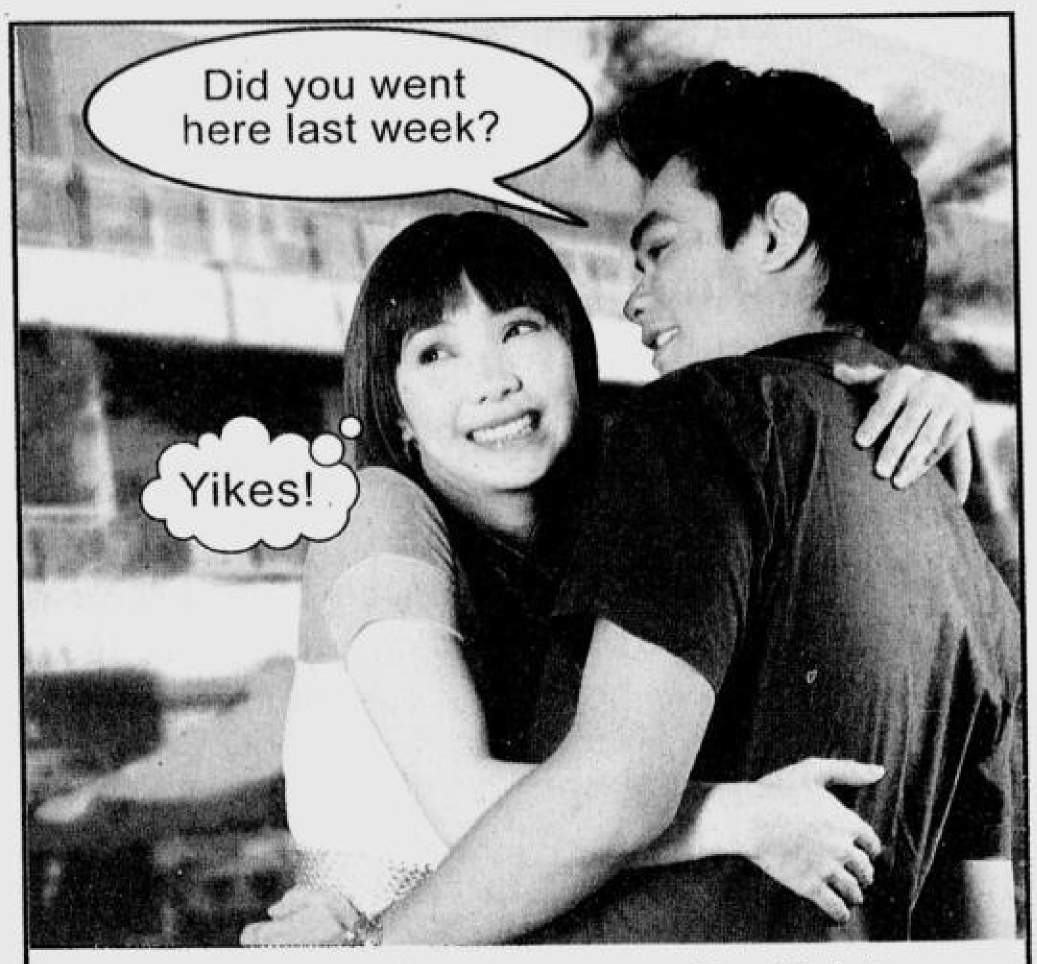
LIMESTONE cliffs at Banol beach, the perfect backdrop for the "cyber couture" story

SETTING the stage for the golden goddess

THE AUTHOR uses her trusty Sony Cyber-shot DSC-T50 to take behind-the-scenes photos.

LUCIA and Lourd channel Marc Nelson by a Seair plane.

MAYOR Marjo Reyes and Counselor Jim Pe graciously welcome the group upon our arrival at the Busuanga airport.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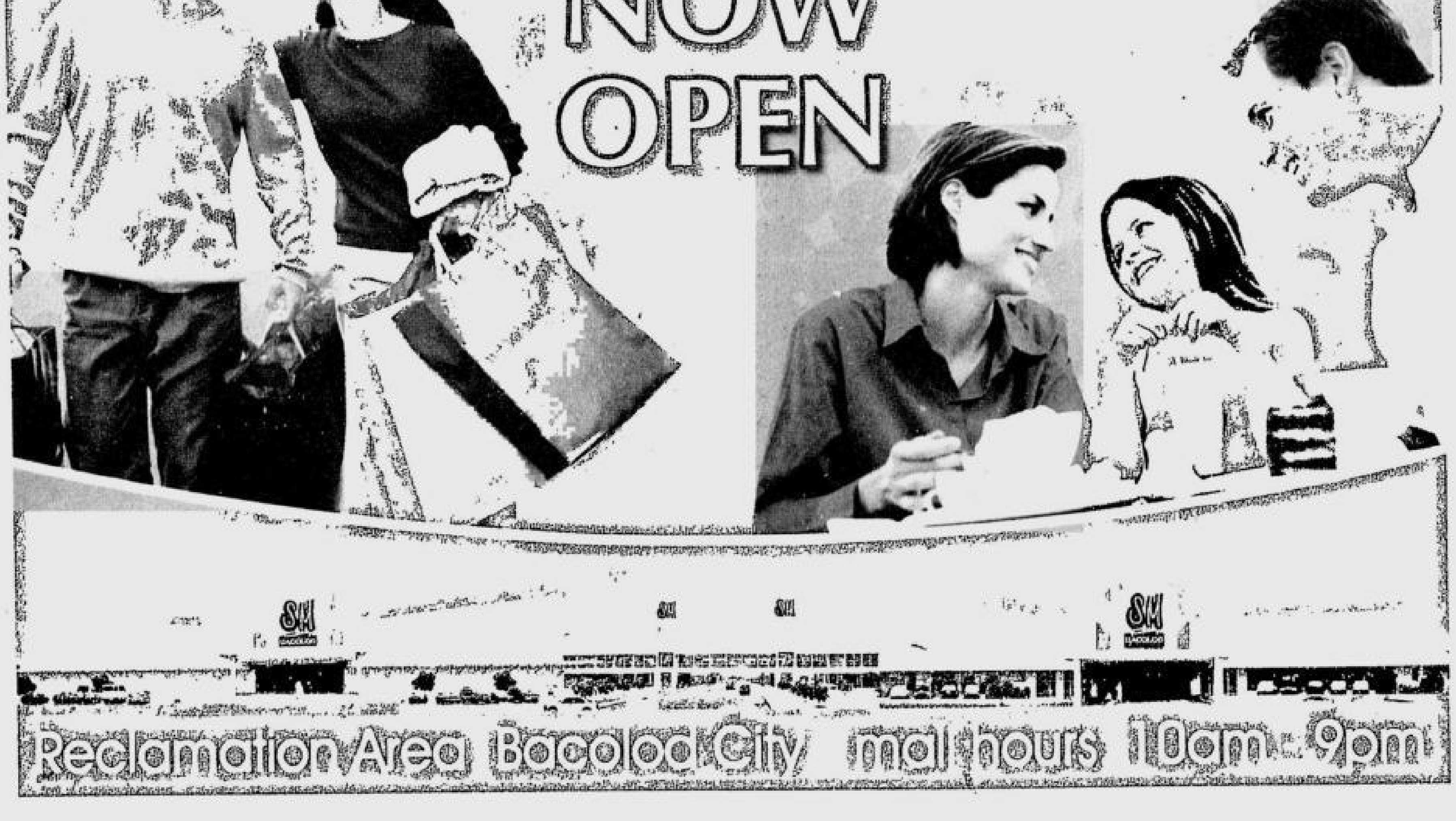

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March 3 • 11 am

John Lloyd Cruz
AXN Time Meet & Greet
March 3 • 4 pm

Bongga Mall Show with the
Super Twins
Nadine Samonte, Dennis Trillo & Jennylyn Mercado
March 4 • 2 pm

at the Fiesta Strip, Southwing

Spectacular Fireworks
March 2 • 7 pm
with **Gruppo Tribale**
March 3 • 7 pm
with **Full Flava**

at the Southwing Lobby

Up Next Band
March 4 • 4 pm

LIFESTYLE

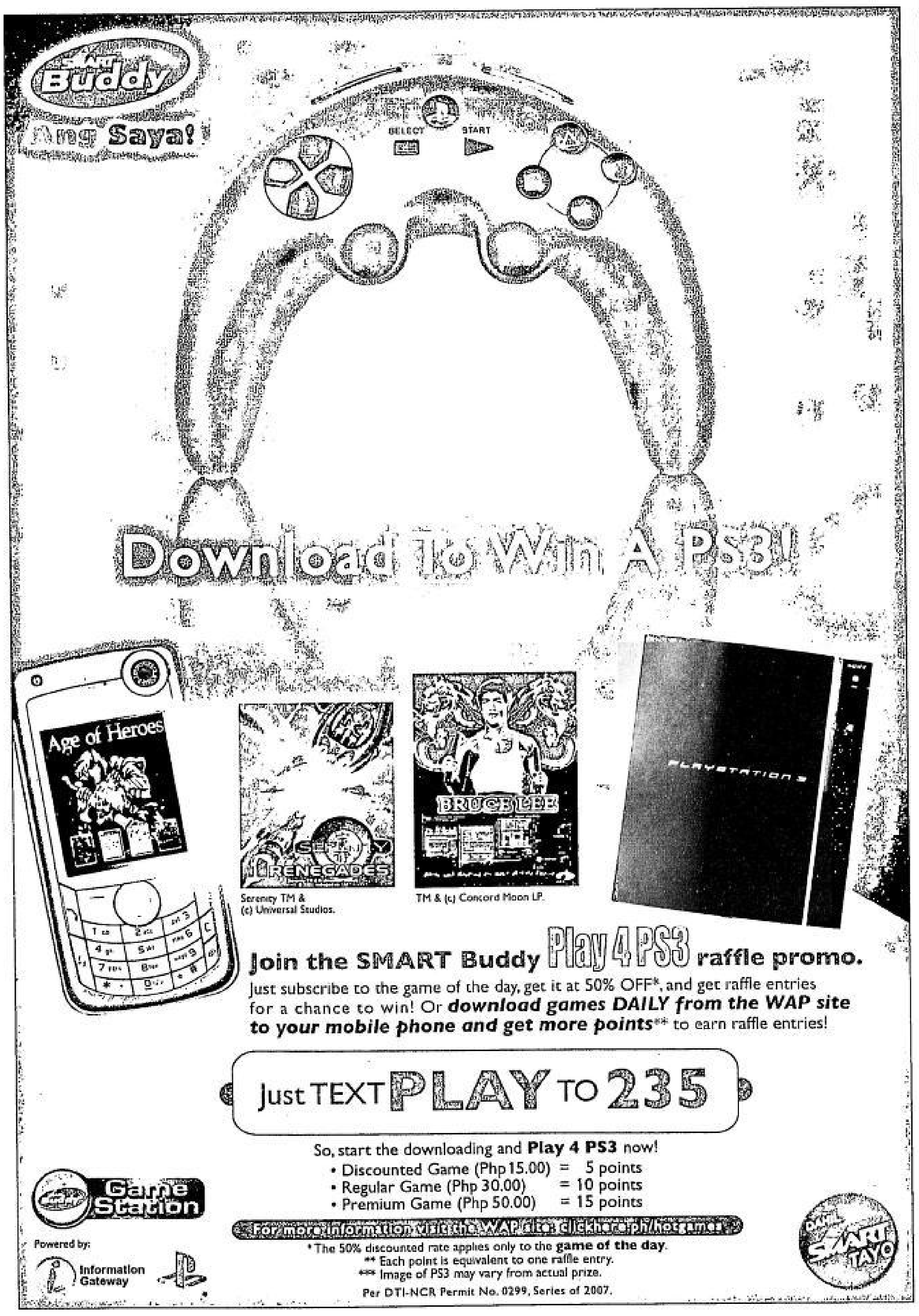
FASHION

A no-show date prompts her to rebel. She's glam all the way in a malliot that plunges deep down but covers up in crochet pants. The sun is shining bright but her trusty vintage sunglasses hide her disappointment; and, it doesn't hurt to have a friend who's always willing to lend an ear.

A place in the SUN

S[illegible] D4

ONE-PIECE plunging gun metal silver by Minx of Charina Sarte and chocolate brown crochet pants and wooden beads, all available at Manami boutique, Nami Boracay; black vintage shades from Sarabia Optical; H800 Moto blue tooth



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LARGE 8

March 9-10, Thurs-Sat, Music Hall
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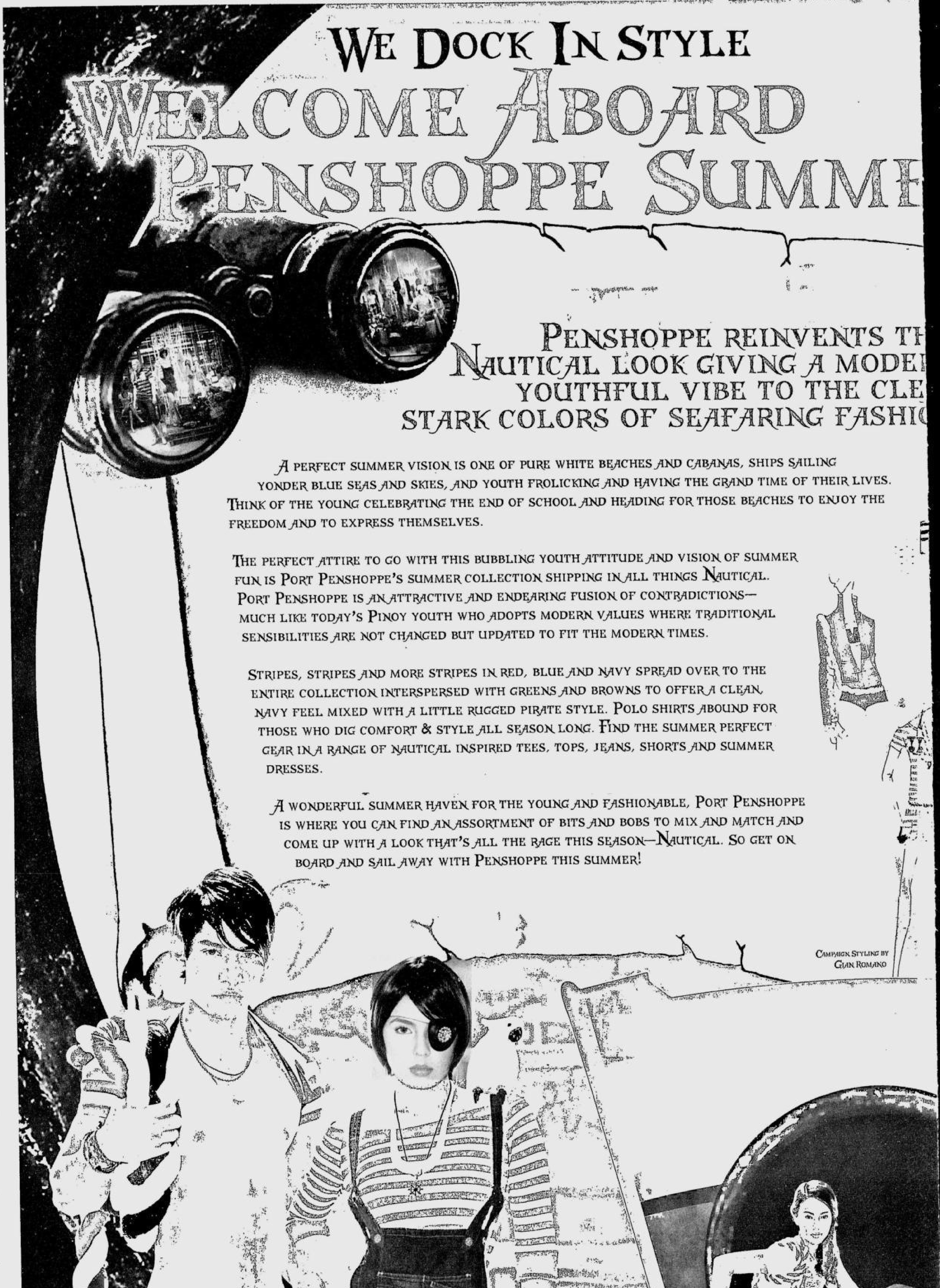

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A perfect summer vision is one of pure white beaches and cabanas, ships sailing yonder blue seas and skies, and youth frolicking and having the grand time of their lives. Think of the young celebrating the end of school and heading for those beaches to enjoy the freedom and to express themselves.

The perfect attire to go with this bubbling youth attitude and vision of summer fun is Port Penshoppe's summer collection shipping in all things Nautical. Port Penshoppe is an attractive and endearing fusion of contradictions—much like today's Pinoy youth who adopts modern values where traditional sensibilities are not changed but updated to fit the modern times.

Stripes, stripes and more stripes in red, blue and navy spread over to the entire collection interspersed with greens and browns to offer a clean, navy feel mixed with a little rugged pirate style. Polo shirts abound for those who dig comfort & style all season long. Find the summer perfect gear in a range of nautical inspired tees, tops, jeans, shorts and summer dresses.

A wonderful summer haven for the young and fashionable, Port Penshoppe is where you can find an assortment of bits and bobs to mix and match and come up with a look that's all the rage this season—Nautical. So get on board and sail away with Penshoppe this summer!

Campaign Styling by
Gian Romano

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www.penshoppe.com

A place in the SUN

A great beach destination is one that will do justice to fashionable pieces and show just how fabulous you are

Jenni Epperson

HOW DO YOU know when a getaway destination is perfect? It's when pictures never look the same and the lighting is always perfect whatever time of day. There's always a nook and cranny that transports you to another place on the globe.

If you're not sure what to pack for such a place, my simple rule is that you can always buy whatever you need when you get there.

Take for example the Manami Boutique in Boracay. This quaint little shop is a welcome surprise after the grueling workout you get from climbing its steep and winding hillside steps.

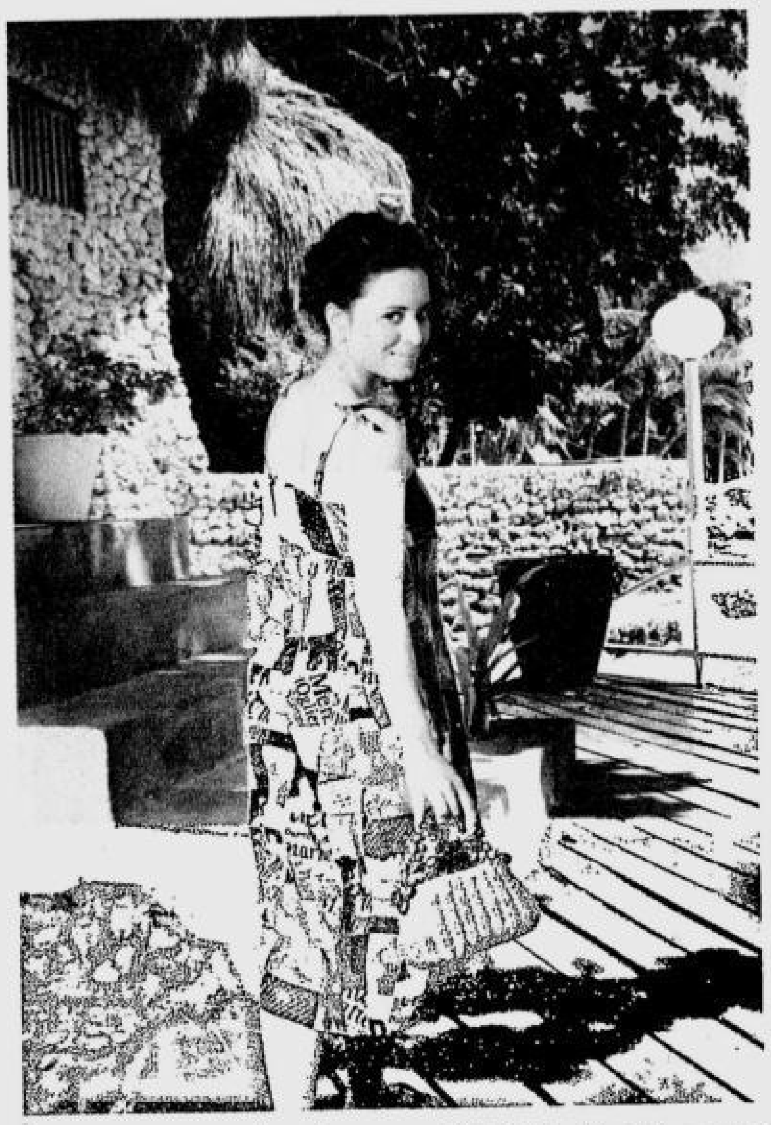
You get the feeling you're in Maui or some cozy shop in Greece. With bamboo flooring and an all-white interior, the boutique showcases not only the functional but the fashionable as well.

You can choose from a variety of swimwear by Twinkle, Minx by Charina Sarte and Cocotini as well as cover-ups, clutch bags with coral beads and embroidered tank tops by Tanya Escaler.

Men, don't fret! A wide array of Havaianas and Team Manila bags and accessories are also available. The cutest items I got were Cocotini summer dresses that could also double as a beach cover-up. I walked away with more items than I had planned on buying.

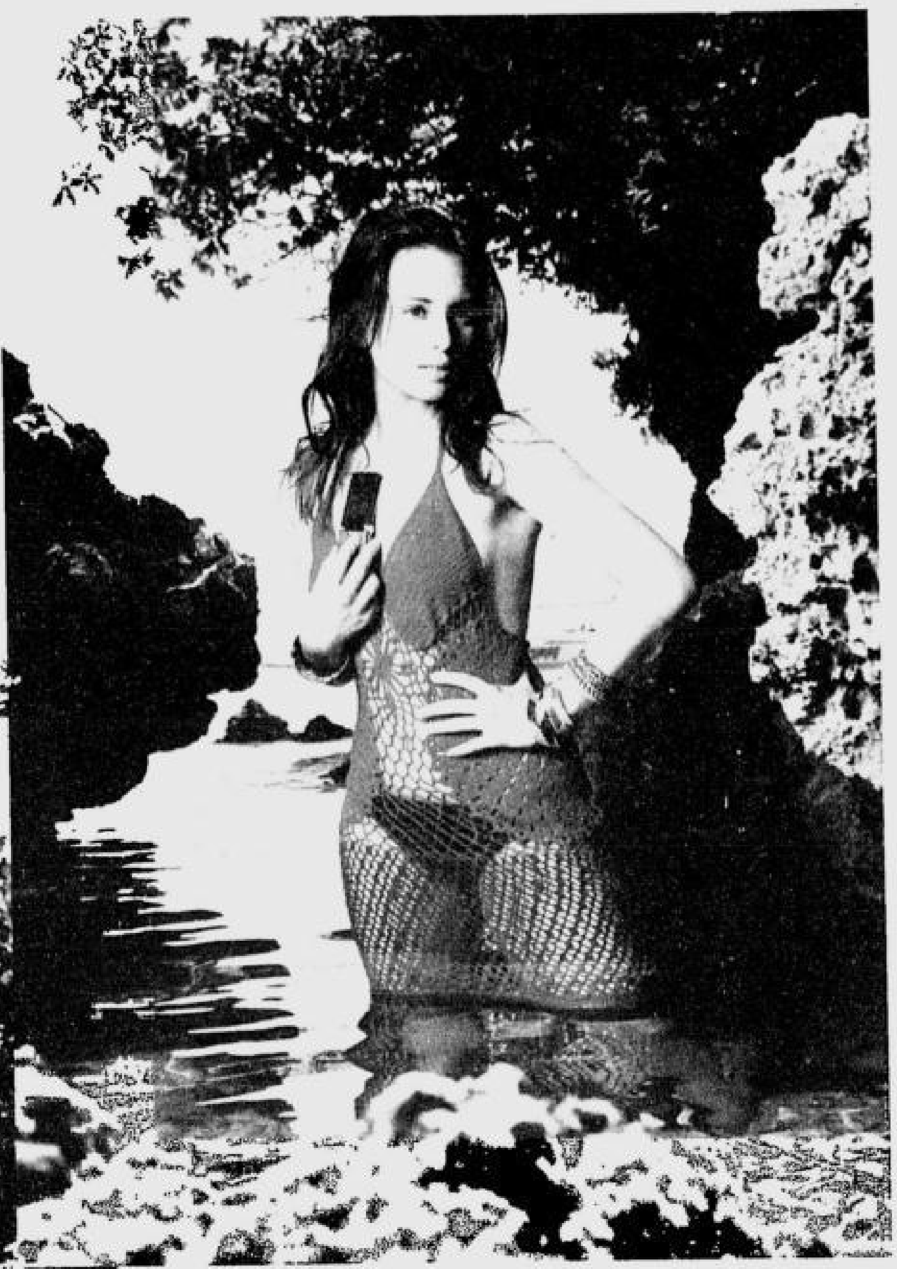
In the unlikely event that a place in the sun seems elusive, the little miss sunshine that you are—your bronze bod, alluring smile and sunny outlook—would just have to be it.

E-mail the author at jfashion @inquirer.com.ph



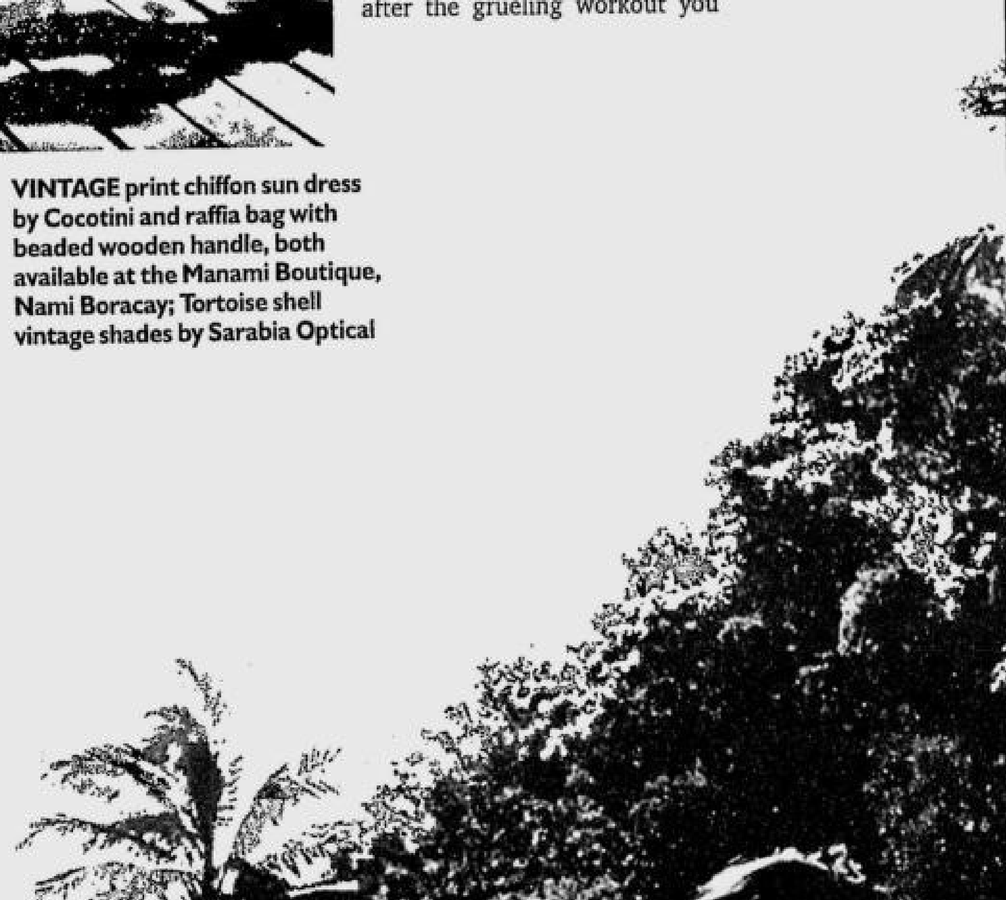
Angela begins her day with a smile, the best accessory to a chiffon sundress in graphic vintage print. With a spring in her step, she starts the day right and she never leaves home without the raffia bag that can fit almost nothing.

VINTAGE print chiffon sun dress by Cocotini and raffia bag with beaded wooden handle, both available at the Manami Boutique, Nami Boracay; Tortoise shell vintage shades by Sarabia Optical



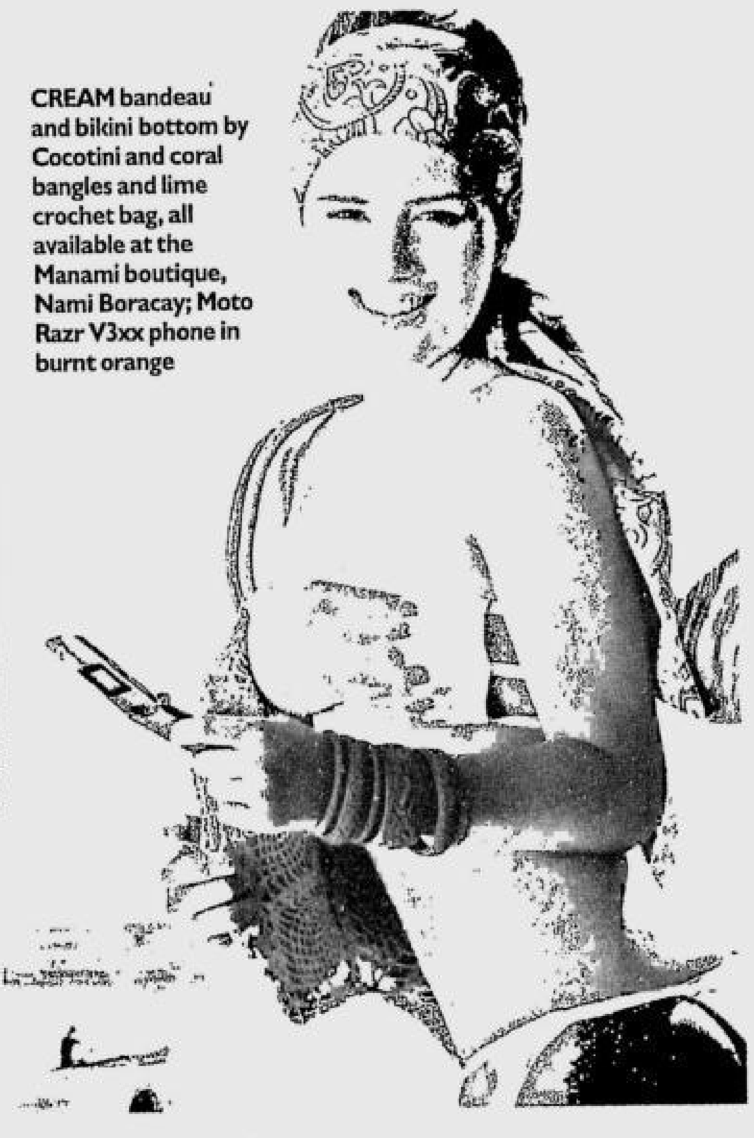
RED crochet dress and bikini bottom by Cocotini available at Manami boutique, Nami Boracay; assorted raffia woven bangles, available at Wiggles Boracay; Moto Krzr phone in fire red

In a red crochet dress that leaves a lot to the imagination, she braves the rocks and corals armed with raffia bangles and her most important accessories- a naughty smile that says it all and a phone that contains the magic words- "I can't wait to see you!"



STRIPED Bikini by Twinkle and striped crochet bag, all available at Manami boutique, Nami Boracay

It's a brand new day and moping is not her thing. Donning her nautical-inspired swimsuit and ethnic beads, she beams with joy. After all, there are many fish in the sea!

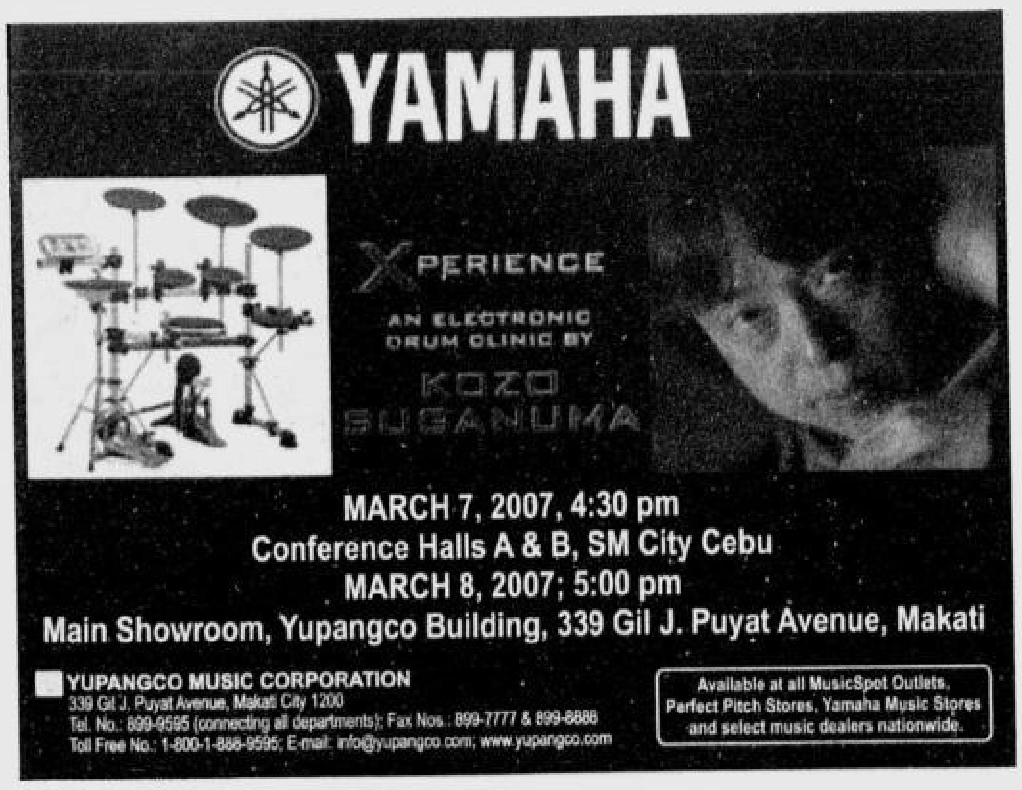


CREAM bandeau and bikini bottom by Cocotini and coral bangles and lime crochet bag, all available at the Manami boutique, Nami Boracay; Moto Razr V3xx phone in burnt orange

With the wind in her hair and the sun on her face, she has just received a message that reads "for your eyes only." The smile on her face outshines the two-piece suit, crochet bag and vintage print head scarf which screams seashore chic.

Photography Erwin Barleta
for Edge of Light
Model Angela Boyd D&J Talent Management
Styling & makeup Xeng Zulueta
for Shu Uemura using the
2007 Spring/Summer Paradox Collection
Hair Mickey See for Shu Uemura
Shot on Location
at Nami resort, Boracay

"SHU-NAMI-MOTO YEAR 5" was presented by Motorola, Shu Uemura, Nami Resort and SEAir. It was also supported by Moet&Hennessy, 3 Vodka, Alize, Zen Liquer, Paraiso Liquer, Kerastase, Giorgio Armani Fragrances, Havaianas & Haagen Daazs, MM/S Vianelle Trimaran Yacht. For inquiries & reservations at Nami Resort, contact the Manila Office at 810-6949 or www.namiresorts.com.


YAMAHA
XPERIENCE
AN ELECTRONIC DRUM CLINIC BY
KOZO SUGANUMA
MARCH 7, 2007, 4:30 pm
Conference Halls A & B, SM City Cebu
MARCH 8, 2007; 5:00 pm
Main Showroom, Yupangco Building, 339 Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati
YUPANGCO MUSIC CORPORATION
339 Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City 1200
Tel. No.: 899-9595 (connecting all departments); Fax Nos.: 899-7777 & 899-8888
Toll Free No.: 1-800-1-888-9595; E-mail: info@yupangco.com; www.yupangco.com
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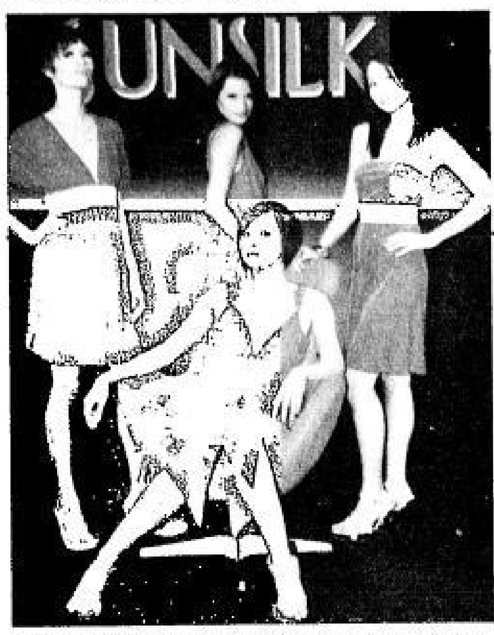
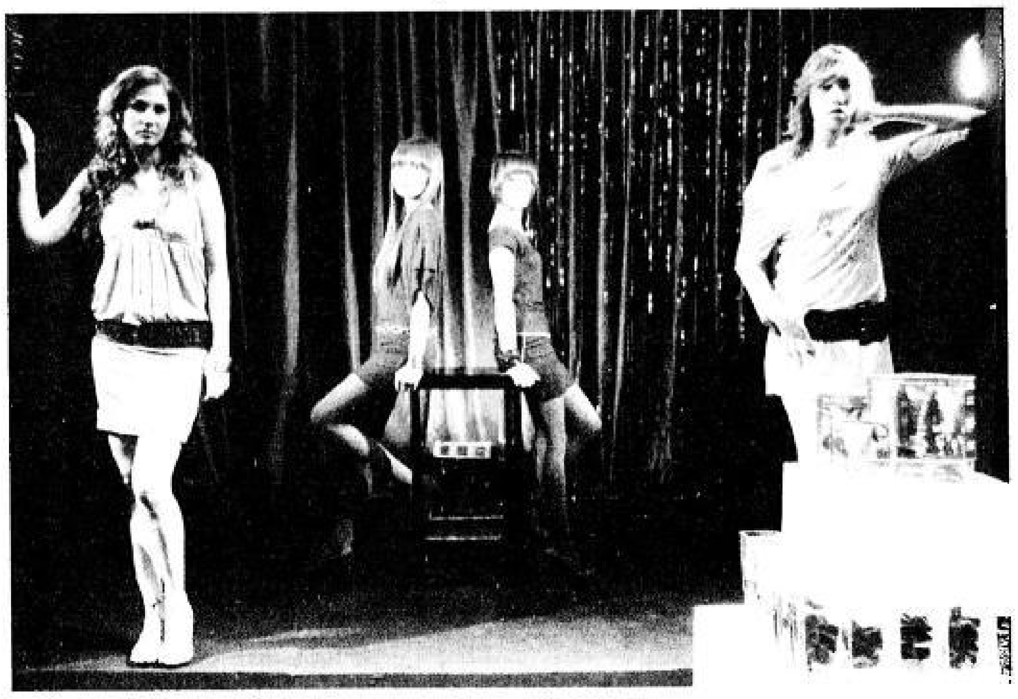


SUNSILK is vibrant in red as interpreted by Nelson Cruz of Essensuals Toni & Guy.

DAZZLING black as interpreted by Gio Ledesma of David's Salon



SUNSILK in brown as interpreted by George Bantolino of Sir George Salon

MIKA Lagdameo, Jo Ann Bitagcol, Debbie Co, Andi Manzano and China Cojuangco

DIVINE Lee and Savannah Lumen

ANNA Palabyab, Alessandra Tinio and Raya Mananquil

CHIQUI and Chia Hollman-Yulo

Color advice from the experts

TODAY'S TOP LOCAL EXPERTS GOT down to the root of hair color during the chic launch of the new Sunsilk Colour Shine System, a new line of hair care for colored hair. Leading the trend-setting pack were three top local artists, Nelson Cruz of Essensuals Toni & Guy, George Bantolino of Sir George Salon, and Gio Ledesma of David's Salon. These three hairstylists interpreted the three variants of the Sunsilk Colour Shine System: red, brown and black.

Dare to shine in burgundy. Cruz explained that women who choose this color are those who are open to new hairstyles. He also mentioned that a deeper shade of red would suit the Filipina's warm complexion, and the shades could be adjusted according to her lifestyle.

Cruz also gave an insightful thought on hair care, and the damage it can experience from the environment. "Colored hair is very sensitive. It needs protection from the sun and from pollution because these are dulling factors."

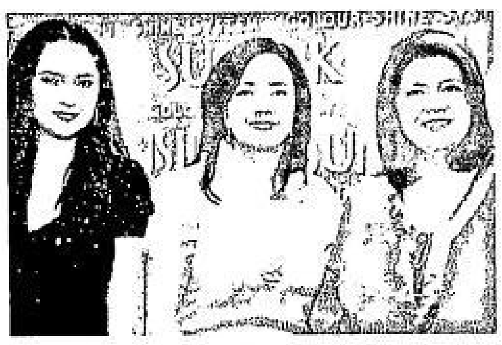
Enrich your tresses in the natural shades of brown. Bantolino interpreted brown in shades of mocha, chocolate and copper. These three different shades of brown are very much suited for most women. He sees women in the workforce, fashionistas and students who want that sophisticated look complement with those particular shades. "I always remind my clients three steps to protect their hair. First, use the right type of shampoo for colored hair. Second, condition your hair after shampooing, and third is to put leave-on conditioner to seal in the shine."

Be elegantly alluring in black. Ledesma says black is beautiful. For Gio, black gives the woman an alluring and sophisticated look. "The woman who chooses black is elegant and possesses a confident disposition. She is intelligent and interesting. There are some misconceptions of women who stick to this color because they are perceived to be hesitant to change the way they look, but I believe that the woman who chooses black makes the statement."

This season, the leader in Philippine hair care once again takes the lead by introducing a first in caring for colored hair. Sunsilk Colour adds noticeable shine to colored hair as 84 percent of women in a recent independent study conducted will attest. This new system contains a revolutionary micro-active conditioning formula that counteracts the damaging effect of colorant chemicals without adding or depositing color. It also infuses hair with nourishing and moisturizing complex, making hair visibly smoother and shinier.

The hair display, hosted by Unilever Hair Care Category director Gilbert Simpao, Sunsilk marketing manager Carlo Endaya and assistant brand manager Chris Monteron, was attended by some of the metro's most stylish and beautiful including actresses Assunta de Rossi. Angelika de la Cruz, Wilma Doesnt, Liezel Martinez and Maritoni Fernandez. Fashionista guests included the exuberant Virgie Ramos, Ching Cruz, Agnes Huibonhua, Debbie Tan, Mia Borromeo and Frannie Jacinto. Hair experts included Douglas Lilico, Jing Monis and Henri Calayag.

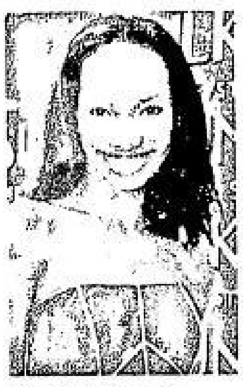
So step out of the shadows and dare to shine with the Sunsilk Colour Shine System!



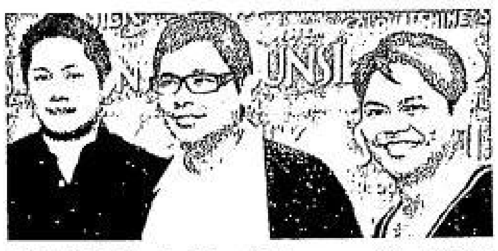
ALYANNA Martinez, Liezel Martinez and Arlene Muhlach

SUNSILK marketing manager Carlo Endaya, Assunta de Rossi and Sunsilk assistant brand manager Chris Monteron

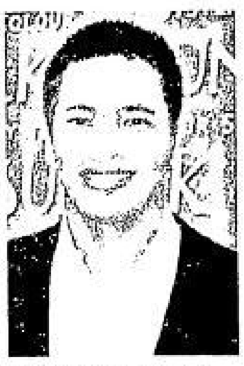
UNILEVER Hair Care category director Gilbert Simpao, Endaya, and Angelika de la Cruz



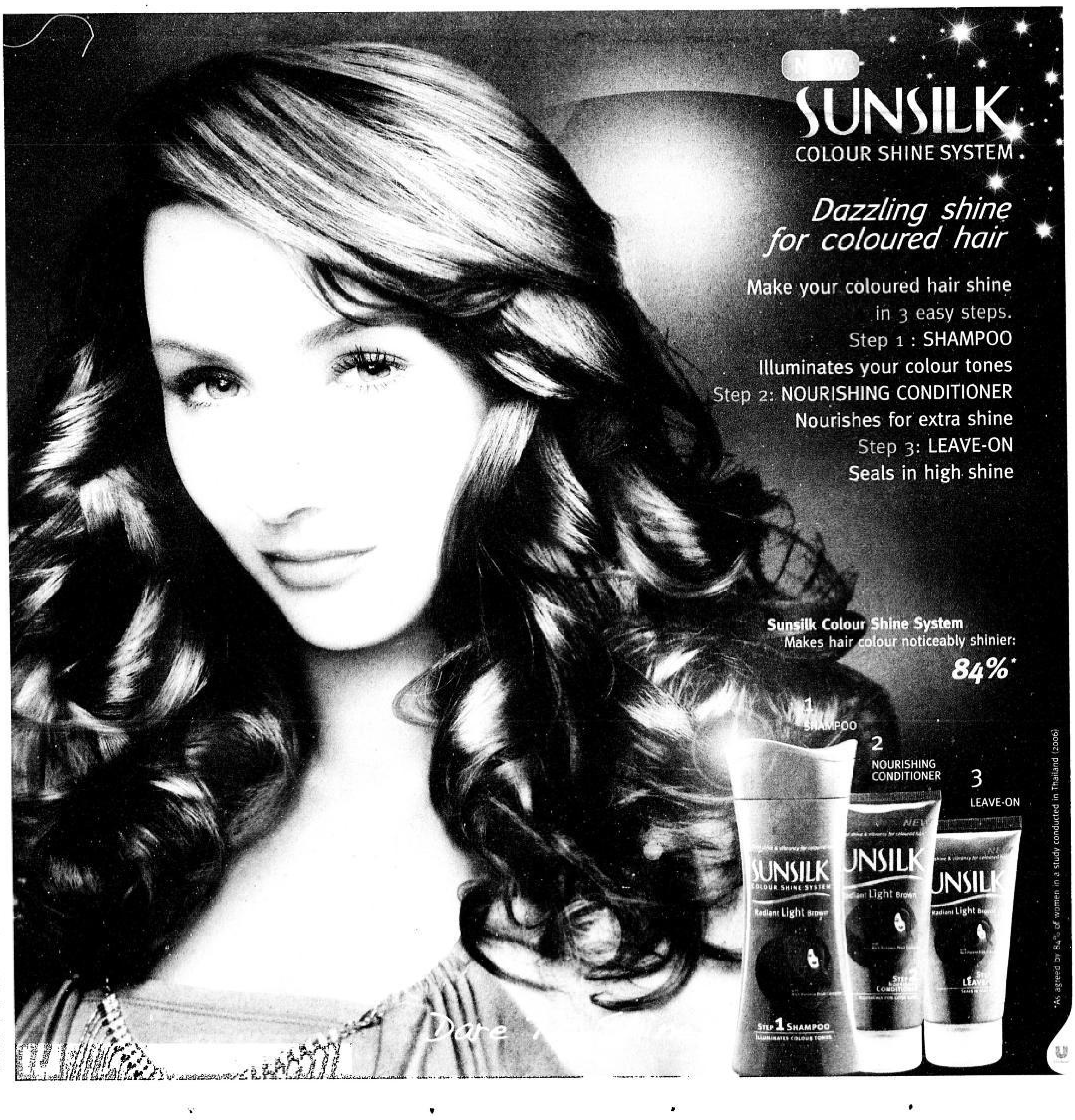
WILMA Doesnt



RONALD Pineda, Henri Calayag and Jing Monis



ROMMEL Adducul


NEW
SUNSILK
COLOUR SHINE SYSTEM
Dazzling shine for coloured hair
Make your coloured hair shine in 3 easy steps.
Step 1 : SHAMPOO
Illuminates your colour tones
Step 2: NOURISHING CONDITIONER
Nourishes for extra shine
Step 3: LEAVE-ON
Seals in high shine
Sunsilk Colour Shine System
Makes hair colour noticeably shinier:
84%*
1 SHAMPOO
2 NOURISHING CONDITIONER
3 LEAVE-ON
SUNSILK
COLOUR SHINE SYSTEM
Radiant Light Brown
STEP 1 SHAMPOO
ILLUMINATES COLOUR TONES
*As agreed by 84% of women in a study conducted in Thailand (2006)
Dare

ALESSANDRA Tinio

CHINA Cojuangco

SAVANNAH Lumen

ANDI Manzano

They dare to shine in color!

SHAKING AWAY THE MYTH THAT hair color is reserved for the high-maintenance and the beauty-conscious, Sunsilk's 11 color advocates encourage women (and men) to color their hair, as both a style and a personal statement.

Recently unveiled at Sunsilk's Museum of Color and Style at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, the 11 color advocates are some of the most promising names in the fields of media, music, business, sports, fashion and the arts.

Musician Savannah Lumen is no stranger to hair color. "I've tried red. I've tried blue," she says. "But this is the first time I've tried a natural hair color and I love it," Lumen says of her brown-dyed locks.

Like Lumen, both model-designer Mikaela Lagdameo-Martinez and radio jock Andi Manzano went for warm cocoa shades that express their easygoing personalities.

"Black is the stronger one. Red is the more daring one," Martinez says. Manzano agrees, "Brown is a relaxed color and I'm a very relaxed person."

Thespian and Futsal Philippine team player China Cojuangco sports short, brown layers, and loves the low-maintenance quality of her hair.

"The simple cut and color helps me live my life easier as an athlete," says Cojuangco. "I can't afford hair that's hard-maintenance. I usually just wash and wear so my hair color and cut should fit my lifestyle!"

She encourages hair coloring as a fuss-free way of enhancing one's God-given assets. "I think natural beauty is still the way to go, but if you want to see a different side of yourself and enhance your look, then hair coloring is something worth trying," Cojuangco says.

Dazzling in black

Black evokes simplicity and elegance; and it's also the quintessential Filipina shade.

Supermodel Raya Mananquil couldn't agree more. "I'm Filipina. My facial features are Filipina. It's more appropriate for me to have this hair color," Mananquil says.

Like Mananquil, entertainment reporter Marie Lozano loves the effortless quality of black. "I have a very busy and hectic schedule. It's easier for me to have black hair," she says.

Naturally brown-haired Anna Palabyab, on the other hand, goes black. She advises those interested in hair color, "Changing color doesn't have to change who you are. It can reflect a mood. It can be a way of expressing yourself."

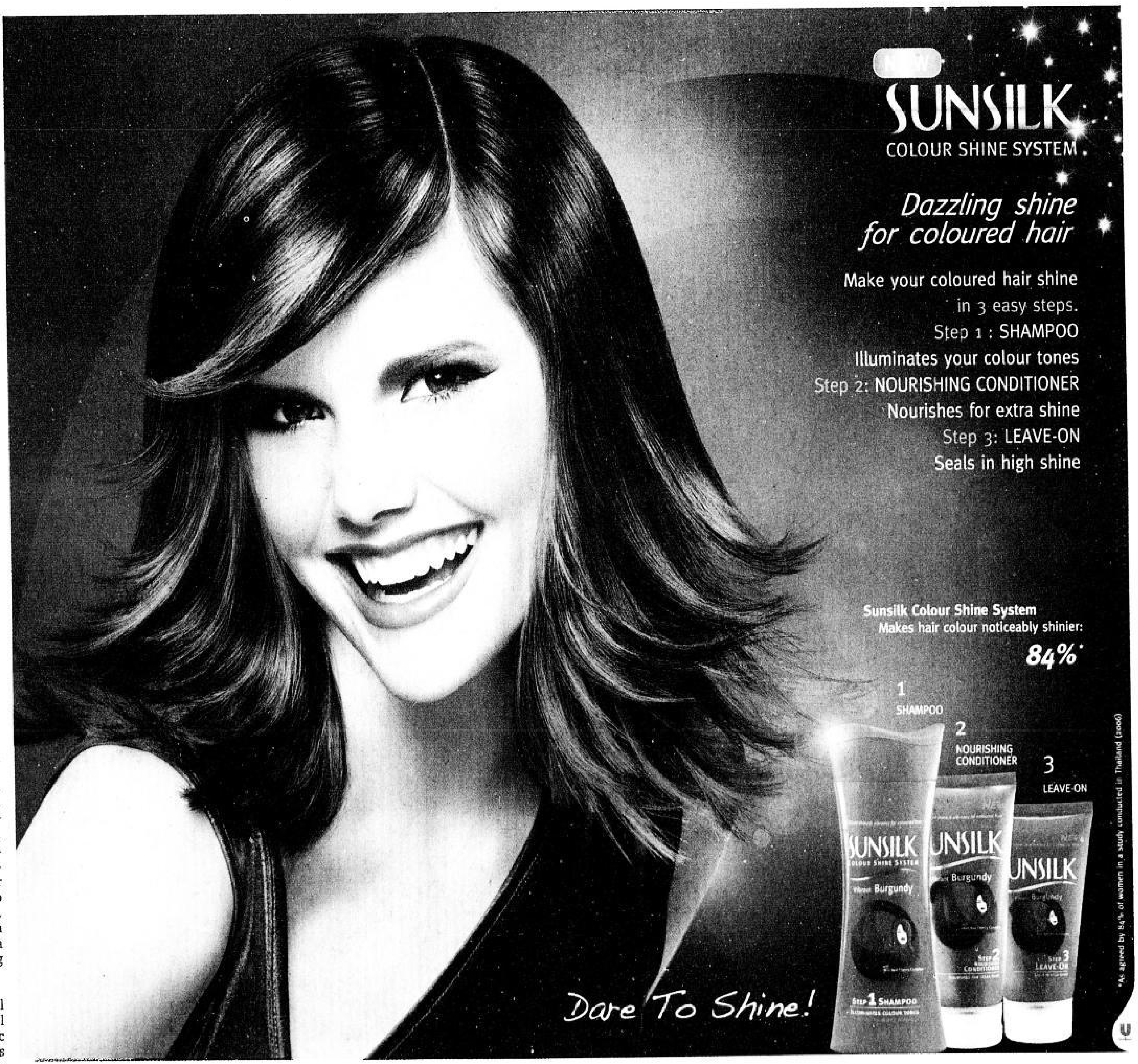
Model-photographer Jo Ann Bitagcol asserts the powerful quality of classic black hair. She says that women shouldn't "be scared to enhance their

Jo Ann Bitagcol

RAYA Mananquil

DIVINE Lee

MIKA Lagdameo



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Burgundy
STEP 1 SHAMPOO
STEP 2 CONDITIONER
STEP 3 LEAVE-ON
Dare To Shine!
*As agreed by 84% of women in a study conducted in Thailand (2006)

DEBBIE Co

ANNA Palabyab

natural color but should choose carefully what color matches personality and lifestyle."

Beautiful burgundy belles

For individuals who'd like to make the dramatic change to burgundy, red hair tones are among the more vibrant shades, evoking passion and energy.

Real estate maven and Globe Asiatique's vice president Divine Lee says, "This color captures my personality. Hair color makes a big difference in setting your mood and telling people who you are. This is I: passionate and adventurous."

Women can also take their cue from musician-writer Alessandra Tinio, whose red hair is an extension of her artistic persona. "I have a pretty loud personality and my hair speaks for that," she says.

Designer Debbie Co says her red streaks represent her passionate qualities. "People should be open to change," she says. "It doesn't have to be drastic. It can be red highlights like mine, which still looks natural but makes my hair look more interesting."

A first in caring for colored hair, the new Sunsilk Colour Shine System consists of wash-and-care products especially developed for colored hair. This system lets you enjoy your color even more by adding vibrancy and shine to colored hair.

MARIE Lozano

ADD DAZZLING SHINE TO COLORED HAIR

SUNSILK Colour Shine System Vibrant Burgundy is formulated with red cherry complex for striking burgundy tones.

MAKE colored hair dazzle with the new Sunsilk Colour Shine System!

EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS and other factors leave your colored hair dull and lacking in vitality. To make hair truly stand out, a special hair care regimen is needed to restore the shine and vibrancy of color tones.

This season, the leader in Philippine hair care once again sets the pace by introducing a first in caring for colored hair, the new Sunsilk Colour Shine System.

Sunsilk Colour adds noticeable shine to colored hair, as confirmed by 84 percent of women interviewed for a recent independent study.

The new system contains a revolutionary micro-active conditioning formula that counteracts the damaging effect of colorant chemicals without adding or depositing color. It also nourishes and moisturizes hair to make it visibly smoother and shinier.

The Sunsilk Colour Shine System comes in three variants: Radiant Light Brown, specially formulated with rich passion fruit complex for brown hair; Dazzling Shiny Black, a black pearl complex for black hair; and Vibrant Burgundy, formulated with red cherry complex for burgundy tones.

Each variant has nutri-proteins, vitamin E and shine protectors. Sunsilk Colour Shine System shields the hair and provides essential nourishment to illuminate it from within.

To maximize the vibrancy and shine of colored hair, Sunsilk Colour Shine System suggests three simple steps: Step 1—Shampoo; Step 2—Conditioner; and Step 3—Leave-on.

The shampoo heightens color tones by gently cleansing dulling residues and helping counteract the damaging effects of colorant chemicals.

The conditioner nourishes and moisturizes hair for extra shine. Hair becomes visibly smoother and shinier.

Finally, leave-on seals in the high shine and protects the hair strands from damage anytime, anywhere.

So don't be dull and dare to shine.

NEW
SUNSILK
Summer
SUNSILK
GET 24-HOUR BEAUTIFUL HAIR!

Oxygen bags outstanding Filipino retailer of the year

Two of Golden ABC's brands cited for the same award

By Marlet D. Salazar

CONSISTENCY AND FOCUS ARE WHAT earned Golden ABC the Outstanding Filipino Retailer for two of its brands from the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA).

Oxygen is the winner of 2006 while flagship brand Penshoppe has been elevated to the Hall of Fame since 2002 for winning a record three times.

Oxygen was a finalist for the year 2005 and finally bagged the prize for 2006, uncontested, which makes it even sweeter for the company and even more so for brand director Dea Alonzo.

"It felt great to be the hands-down winner," Alonzo said.

"It is an affirmation by our peers at PRA that our work is industry-leading and world-class," said Albert Ong, vice president for marketing of Golden ABC.

FROM left: Director Victorio Mario Dimagiba of DTI, Jorge T. Mendiola, VP for Regional Affairs of PRA, Dea Alonzo, brand director for Oxygen, Bernie Liu, CEO of Golden ABC, and Maris Chua, president of PRA.

FROM left: regional sales managers Jojo Magisa, Willard Centeno, and Marge Manankil, Penshoppe Teenlab brand manager Jeff Bascon, Oxygen brand director Dea Alonzo, Memo brand director Louie Scott, and ForMe brand director Chim See-Lua

OXYGEN Team with brand director Dea Alonzo, CEO Bernie Liu, VP for marketing Albert Ong, VP for sales Dino Sagun and regional sales managers Marge Manankil, Jojo Magisa and Willard Centeno.

PRA Awards is the most prestigious award-giving body in the retail industry. To be recognized and much more, elevated to the Hall of Fame, not only put more premium to the name but also certify the outstanding works of Filipinos in the fashion industry.

Penshoppe first earned its PRA award in 2000, then for the year 2001, and finally in 2002 finally making it to the Hall of Fame.

Oxygen has actually been in the market for a decade starting out as one of the collections of established brand Penshoppe. It initially created graphic tees capturing the male college market.

Recognizing the diverse profile of consumers today, Golden ABC geared Oxygen's efforts to produce casual gimmick wear to the young working people while Penshoppe has already positioned itself for the college market.

Alonzo said Oxygen opt to adapt the European fit "because we want to flatter the Filipino male when it comes to fashion." She describes European style as "stylish, sexy, and modern. It satisfies the demanding fashion taste of hip and individualistic urbane market."

The evolution of fashion also saw rapid growth in diversity of different markets. Before, companies concentrate only on the demographics, now they also have to consider the psychographics.

"Oxygen is about casual gimmick wear that complements the urban sophisticated lifestyle," said Ong, "It satisfies the discriminating taste of hip and individualistic urbane market."

What also distinguishes Oxygen from other brands in the market is it offers original uncompromising edgy designs in limited quantities. No repetition no matter how popular a design, is the living dogma of the people behind Oxygen.

"Our designs celebrate the Filipino designer's creativity and resourcefulness," Ong said.

Alonzo revealed that Oxygen will be working with top designer Pepsi Herrera on the premium denims they will be introducing in the market this year. Popular model and TV personality Derek Ramsay remains loyal to the brand he endorsed many years ago, as he will once again be the face of Oxygen.

Little known to this generation, Golden ABC is a company that came from the Queen City of the South, Cebu.

Addressing the true Filipino market is one of the top concerns of the company in developing other brands. While Penshoppe and its "kid sister" Penshoppe Teenlab are already well-known and recognized brands in the Philippines and other parts of China, Golden ABC saw the opportunity to serve and complement the expanding taste of people.

Golden ABC also aims to provide wider options to all market segments. More importantly, "All our brands are committed to giving Filipino consumers better choices," said Gigi Tibi, marketing and visual merchandising head of Penshoppe. Penshoppe and its brand extension, all-accessory Penshoppe Teenlab is for the youth while Oxygen is for the twenty-something.

Memo and ForMe targets the young adult working market.

Memo gives working men - and even women - versatile clothing that are current and stylish.

"Quality designed products and a great new store design firms up Memo's brand position as a highly imaged brand for the upwardly-mobile young adult market offering affordable to well-priced quality products," said Louie Rosales Scott, brand director for Memo.

"Memo offers products equal in quality to foreign brands, with more modern styling, at a fraction of their prices," Scott said. "We want to give men and women an option to get good quality items without even looking outside Filipino brands."

The latest addition to the family of brands of Golden ABC is like heaven-sent for women.

ForMe caters to women of different shapes and sizes, and is the pioneer Philippine brand in the manner of dressing by body type.

"ForMe aspires to change the standard in which women are judged," said Chim See-Lua, brand director of ForMe, "Women can now look good with the understanding that clothes can be designed to enhance their assets and hide their flaws."

"We realized that women can't afford to wear the same style because of their different shapes," See-Lua explains.

Whether you are hour-glass, pear-shaped, heavy on top, or rectangle, there is always something for you at ForMe stores.

"It makes shopping easier for women because the stores are already arranged in sections according to these 'shapes'," she added.

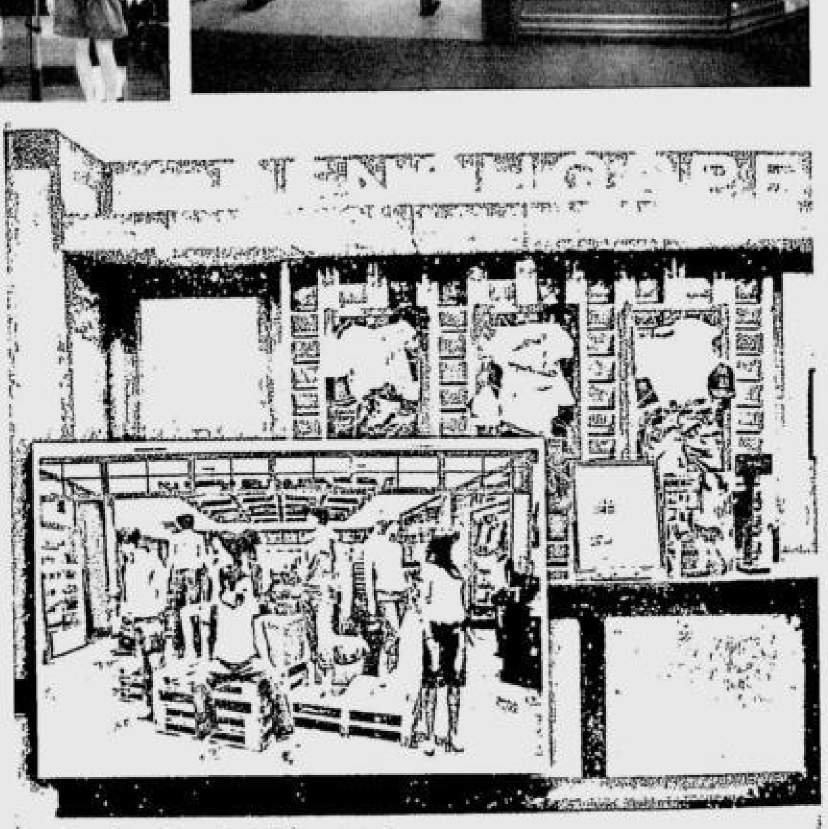
Because Golden ABC has maintained a more focused attitude to its brands, it has continuously given consumers something to look forward to every time.

To top it all, in spite of the influx of foreign brands, the company which is a proudly Filipino-owned and -run, consistently overtakes the competition.

But it doesn't rest on its laurels just because of the numerous awards it collected. In fact, winning the PRA award serves more of a challenge to always come up with something new and appealing to its markets.

"You cannot slack," Ong said.

PENSHOPPE
TEENLAB



FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

F1

LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Contributing Editor
Ria Francisco-Prieto

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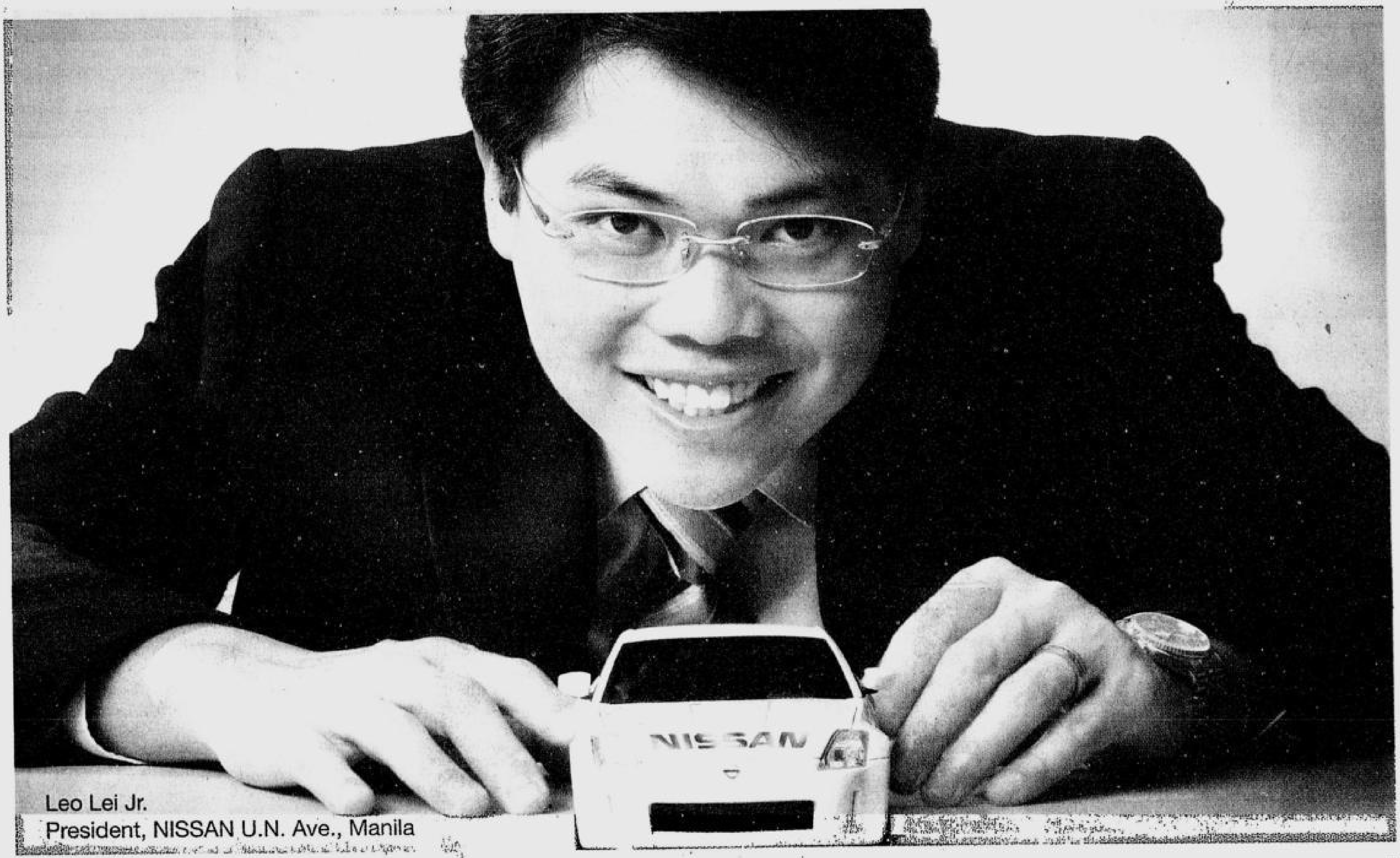
Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle
Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city
/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

BEAUTY

Beauty buzz Beauty buzz Beaut

Suffering from low self-esteem? The search for Miss Ugly (No More!) is on. Watch out for it in our Fitness section on Tuesday and learn how you can win P1 million worth of beauty-enhancing procedures from the best doctors in the country. This event is sponsored by Beverly Hills 6750 Cosmetic Surgery and Skin Institute. Three winners of a total makeover will be chosen.



Leo Lei Jr.
President, NISSAN U.N. Ave., Manila

"Sun keeps things rolling by saving us almost ₱40,000 a month."

Surprising isn't it? That even the President of Nissan, U.N. Ave., Manila can give so much time and attention to the tiniest of details. Details, which Leo thinks about everyday, surrounded by mini versions of the cars he sells. Keeping track of the small things like phone bills, is one reason why he switched to Sun.

"I was intrigued by the 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited service. I felt it would help us cut costs and be more efficient. Especially now that times are challenging, we really have to be concerned about expenses." And as information gets around faster, customers get what they want, just the way they want it. Sun excels at services that are tailor-fit to your business.

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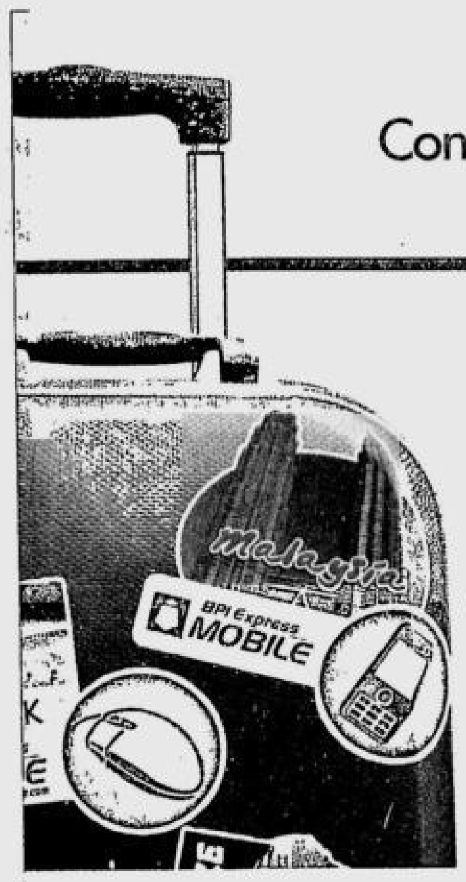

Congratulations to the grand draw winners!

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Fab beauty finds

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

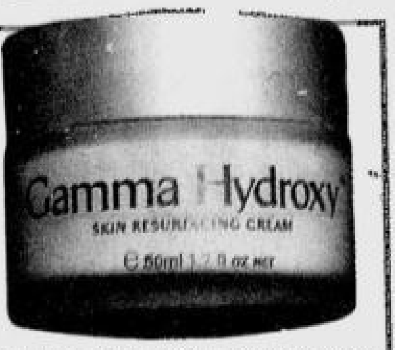
THERE ARE so many beauty products out there in the market. Today I'm featuring the ones that I find exciting and that I hope you would want to check out.

E-mail the author at rbeauty@inquirer.com.ph

Fashion 21's Perfect Stick Concealer

This concealer with tea tree is great for oily skin. It prevents zits, but beyond that, it covers them and also has healing ingredients! What I like about it the most is even if you don't have zits, it is a good product to use since it spreads on easily, so I don't have to worry about stretching my skin too much. It also comes in four shades so there is one for every skintone.

Available at Landmark and all major department stores



Skin Doctor's Gamma Hydroxy Skin Resurfacing Cream

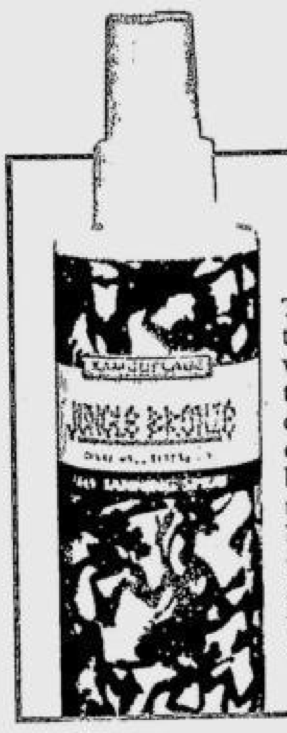
This cream helps smoothen your skin with its exfoliating effect. It also evens out skin texture and color, so you look years younger. It makes my skin look fresh and gives it new life.

Available at Rustan's Essenses.

Avon's Bust-Sculpt Contouring Cream

Who wants sagging breasts? Please raise your hand if you do and skip this number. I doubt anyone wants them, though. That's why it is good to know that Avon has a product dedicated to keeping our breasts perky. This product works best on women who have just given birth or are going through drastic weight changes.

Available through all Avon distributors



Kamouflage's Jungle Bronze Self-Tanning Spray

This spray is perfect for all those who have pale skin or who just want to enhance their tan. What I like about it is it dries fast and won't turn you orange—just what it says in the box! So if you want to sport those short shorts that have been stuck in your closet, try this spray and you can wear anything without having to worry about uneven skintone or a sullen color.

Available at Rustan's Essenses.

La Prairie Skin Caviar

One of the best products, if not the best, you can indulge your skin with. It is painful to the pocket (but very very worth it) so I suggest you put it on a wish list and leave it on a table so someone who thinks you deserve it can give it to you as a gift. It may sound funny but that's what some of my friends do and it works.

Available at Rustan's Essenses.

Photos by Chito Vecina

Kamouflage's Jungle Bronze Bronzing Skin Tone

If you love to bask in the sun even if you know it is not the best thing you can do for your skin, at least apply this bronzing skin gloss. It has sunscreen and exotic moisturizers to give you glowing bronze skin found on a Brazilian goddess.

Even I who try not to brave the sun couldn't resist tanning myself a bit with this product, and the truth is, it delivered what it said it would.

Available at Rustan's Essenses.

Maui Island's Secret Browning Formula

Anyone out there who wants to get dark fast, this product is made especially for you. I had my friend who is addicted to tanning salons try it, and she said she got a great shade that a tanning bed could not give. Since this product doesn't have SPF, you can choose what degree of protection you want underneath. Use your fave SPF lotion first, then, after about 15 minutes, lather the browning formula all over. It's summer, so the darker, the better.

Available at Nothing But Water and The Nail Spa

Island Spice's Hair Spa

If you are stuck in the city like I am and need a break from all the noise, the best escape is in the shower, where you can treat yourself to a hair spa. Island Spice's Hair Spa smells of coconut and vanilla, which makes me feel like I am in Boracay. It leaves my hair conditioned and moisturized, soft to the touch and so delightfully pleasant to the nose.

Available at Island Spice.

Shu Uemura Nail Polish

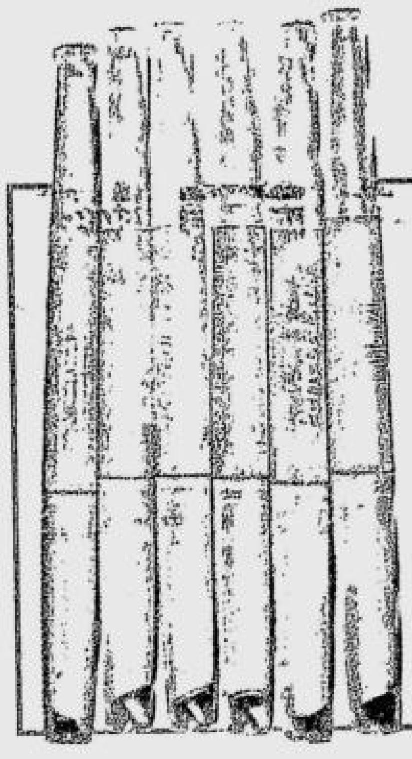
Express yourself through the color you paint your nails! It is the biggest thing in Hollywood and now here in Manila. Yes, deep reds and whites are in but they do not suit all of us. So go and look for the shade that can vamp up your look and style. Get original and make a color choice.

Available at Rustan's Essenses.

L'oreal Tec Play Ball Series

These three variants offer everyone good grooming options. For those who have short hair, the Deviation Paste is perfect. Beach babes will love the Beach Creme, while those like me who just want soft manageable hair will go for the Motion Gelée with the fuchsia cover.

Available at all leading salons



Fashion 21 Perfect Lips

If bag space is an issue—which can be especially during formal events when we lug our tiny purses—this lip liner-and-lipstick-in-one is the solution. I love that it also stays on for hours and, since it is very reasonably priced, I can have more than one color and use whatever shade I want depending on my mood.

Available at Landmark and all major department stores.

Anti-obesity supplements

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

IF YOU RUN INTO ANY OF THE people I went to school with from grade school all the way up to college they would tell you I was always a good 10-20 pounds underweight. Today's size zero clothing would just slide off.

Then I hit 23 and the weight gain was out of control. Throughout my 20s I was overweight most of the time and even diagnosed with hypothyroidism—when the thyroid gland is severely underactive so metabolism stops and one is always too tired and hungry.

Even when medication balanced that out, my weight just would not go any lower and that was just due to getting older. I did extensive research on what obese people were deficient in and two supplements kept popping up.

Coenzyme Q10

The production of this antioxidant peaks at age 20 then just declines from there. The body stops making it and we just use up what is stored. Deficiency in CoQ10 leads to cancer, high blood pressure, heart problems, strokes, lack of energy, accelerated loss of firmness in skin, and gum disease which may lead to tooth loss and infection.

It indirectly helps us lose weight because as the body's spark plug, it jumpstarts the energy-producing cells and makes it use up fat as energy fuel so fat is burned off and not stored in the body.

Our recommended daily allowance is at least 30 milligrams and although CoQ10 can be obtained through food, one has to eat about two pounds of meat, plus who knows how much veggies and seafood daily to get this much. Cooking also depletes this nutrient so you may actually need three pounds of meat daily.

I take between 90 to 120 mg daily and my weight has been under control since. Occasionally, I find a 100-mg dose in brands like Health Xpress (P2,580 per 60 pieces; different from Health Express brand) or Lifetime, and grab it because they are usually out of stock. If that's the case, I get the Health Express house brand instead (P1,500 for 100 pieces) but is only 30 mg per capsule, and just take it three to four times a day with a meal.

Note: CoQ10 is fat soluble so take it with a meal or some butter to get maximum absorption and benefits.

L-Carnitine

This is one of the main ingredients of Fitrum, Judy Ann Santos' weight-loss supplement. It drains fat out of the fat cells so that stored fat can be carried off by CoQ10 and used up as energy.

On its own, it stimulates the rate of fat burning. It is an important component for cardiovascular metabolism, exercise performance, weight management and brain function. This is an amino acid so it has to be taken with an empty stomach. I consume between 1,000-1,500 mg a day. The brand I take is Twinlab (P2,700) that has 500 mg per capsule. By an empty stomach I mean I drink the first two tablets first thing in the morning and the third capsule two hours before or after any main meal.

Warning: Go see your doctor to inquire if these will counteract any of your medications or aggravate any existing condition you may have.

HEALTH Xpress Co Q-10

Tackling the whole iceberg

Whenever you see breakouts, wrinkles and age or sun spots, it's already a result of deeper damage from the inside that has risen to the surface like a tip of an iceberg. Repairing and nourishing from within will not only prevent damage from surfacing but will keep your skin looking young longer. Imedeen, the famous skin vitamin, is now exclusively available in Rustan's.

Before I got all interested in skin supplements, there was already Imedeen. The two variants I have tried are the Classic (P2,800) and Time Perfection (P3,900) both packs contain a 30-day supply. Although both improved the moisture content and firmness of my skin plus gave me a glow, I am partial to the latter. The skinny purple veins on my cheeks which often afflicts light skin became less visible as did my pores and acne breakouts became less frequent with Time Perfection.

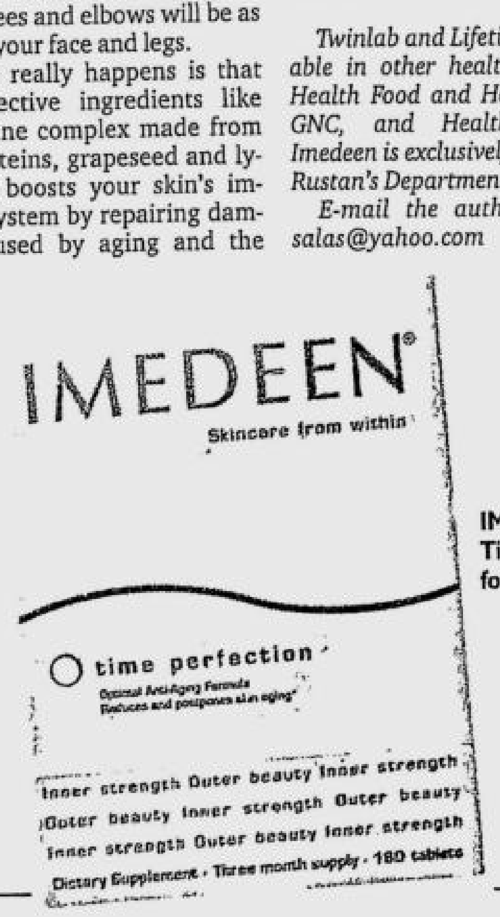
This may seem expensive but it tackles every square inch of skin from head to toe, not just the face for a full month in one box. Mosquito bites and scratches heal faster and disappear. Your knees and elbows will be as silky as your face and legs.

What really happens is that the effective ingredients like Biomarine complex made from fish proteins, grapeseed and lycopene boosts your skin's immune system by repairing damage caused by aging and the sun, detoxifying and nourishing from within. Results will be obvious by the second or third month.

Inquire about Platinum membership at Health Express outlets because members get a 20-percent discount on all items except concessionaire's. Call 8927978 or 8401855.

Twinlab and Lifetime are available in other health stores like Health Food and Herb Products, GNC, and Healthy Options. Imedeen is exclusively available at Rustan's Department store.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com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Optimal Anti-Aging Formula
Reduces and postpones skin aging
Inner strength Outer beauty Inner strength
Outer beauty Inner strength Outer beauty
Inner strength Outer beauty Inner strength
Dietary Supplement · Three month supply · 180 tablets

IMEDEEN Time Perfection for ages 35-50

GRADUATION DAY SALE

Makati Supermart Alabang

CASH & CARRY SUPERMARKET

UniMart

From March 02 to 18, 2007

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0845, series of 2007

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SUPER VALUE STORES

Campbell's
Cream of Mushroom, Canada
284ml P34.95/can

Nabisco
Chips Ahoy!
Real Chocolate Chip Cookies
170g P61.95/pk
340g P102.50/pk

White Onion P44.10/kg • Wansoy P136.50/kg • Spring Onion P63.00/kg • Oranges P73.50/kg • Fuji Apple P52.50/kg • Ripe Mango Medium P57.75/kg • Sinta Papaya P28.35/kg • Washington Red Apple #13 P89.25/kg • Apple Mango P29.40/kg • Strawberry P52.50/pk • Taiwan Pechay P52.50/kg • Mandarin P84.00/kg • Upo P15.75/pc • Patola P15.75/kg • Native Mustard P36.75/kg • Baguio Tomatoes P38.85/kg • Cucumber P42.00/kg

Welch's
100% Grape Juice Purple
1.89lit P181.50/bot

Nestle Crunch
Milk Chocolate w/ Crisped Rice
6x43.9g P128.50/pk

Monterey Meatshop
Ground Beef P183.00/kg
Lamb Breast or Flank P275.00/kg
Lamb Neck P275.00/kg
Lamb Shoulder P275.00/kg
Ground Pork or Lean Meat P165.00/kg

Purefoods
Mom's Kitchen
Dinuguan, Bopis 150g P28.20/can
Frozen Adobo Flakes, Callos, Patatim 250g P62.95/pk

Magnolia
Chicken Oriental Wings
P141.00/kg
Chicken Pulutan Mix
P84.00/kg

Knorr
Broth Cubes Chicken, Beef
66g P26.25/pk
Lady's Choice
Mayonnaise 470ml P145.50/bot

Datu Puti
Vinegar
4lit P87.15/bot
1lit P24.60/bot

Marca Leon
Corn Oil, Plastic
3.2kg P318.00/jug 1.6kg P165.00/jug
Vegetable Oil, Plastic
3.2kg P220.00/jug 1.6kg P112.00/jug

Campbell's
Chunky Chicken Corn Chowder
533g P123.50/can
Chunky New England Clam Chowder
533g P123.50/can

Campbell's
Condensed Soup Golden Mushroom
Condensed Soup Request Minestrone
Low Sodium Chicken w/ Noodles Soup
305g P67.50/can

Want Want
Senbei Rice Cracker
112g P50.75/pk 56g P25.75/pk
Sunbest
Whole Kernel Sweet Corn,
Cream Style Sweet Corn 425g P25.00/can

Del Monte
100% Pineapple Juice 1l P43.30/can
Sweetened Four Seasons Juice Drink
1l P47.25/can
Tomato Sauce 1kg P58.30/pouch
Spaghetti Italian Sauce 1kg P60.10/pouch

Act II
Microwave Popcorn, 3 ct
Butter Lover's, Old Fashioned Natural
297g P86.25/pk
Filippo Berio
Extra Virgin Olive Oil 1l P448.50/bot
Olive Oil Regular 500ml P229.50/bot

Underwood
Liver Wurst Spread
120g P72.50/can

French's
Classic Yellow Mustard
255g P38.25/bot 170g P31.95/bot
Squeeze 226g P45.50/bot

Wishbone
Dressing
Italian, Thousand Island
237ml P75.50/bot

Bear Brand
Powdered Filled Milk
1800g P437.95/can
900g P223.50/can
150g P34.50/pk

Gain
Plus Advance Growing Up Milk w/ Eye-Q
1.8kg P906.25/can
School Advantage Pre-School Milk w/ Eye-Q
1.8kg P846.95/can
Pedia Sure
Complete Advanced Nutritional Powder
Vanilla, Chocolate 1.6kg P753.50/can

Anchor
Family Powdered Milk
800g P140.00/box 300g P65.90/box
Anlene
Gold Chocolate, Vanilla 400g P183.25/box

Country Time
Flavor Drink Mix
Lemonade, Pink Lemonade
538g P117.50/bot

Nestea
Lemon Iced Tea
500g P61.25/pk
200g P26.95/pk

White King
Puto Steamed White Cake Mix
400g P57.50/box
Bibingka Rice Cake Mix 500g P73.50/box
Sunkist
Lemon Iced Tea, Green Tea 500ml P16.30/bot

Betty Crocker
Angel Food Cake Mix Confetti 474g
Angel Food White Cake Mix 453g
P141.50/box

V8
Splash Fruit Medley, Berry Blend,
Tropical Blend, Strawberry Kiwi
473ml P62.50/bot

100 Plus
Isotonic Sports Drink
Regular, Aqtiv
Pet 500ml P19.85/bot
Can 330ml P17.25/can

Royal Crown Cola 330ml P11.50/can
Zest-O Juice Drink
Orange, Grapes, Strawberry, Pineapple, Guyabano, Calamansi, Apple 10x200ml P46.50/box
Mango, Mango-Orange, Mango-Calamansi, Dalandan 10x200ml P53.00/box

V8
Splash, Strawberry Kiwi,
Berry Blend, Tropical Blend
1.89lit P192.50/bot

Mariani
Pitted Dried Plums Bite Size,
Pitted Dried Plums
283g P120.50/pk

San Miguel
Pale Pilsen in Can 330ml P22.95/can
Light in Can 330ml P23.55/can
Red Horse
Beer in Can 330ml P22.10/can

Franzia
Red Wine, California Red,
Chillable Red
3lit P535.00/bot

Nabisco
Chips Ahoy!
Chewy Chocolate Chip Cookies
425g P123.50/pk

Gardenia
Muffins Corn, Choco, Blueberry
3x30g P25.25/pk

Betty Crocker
Bacos Chips, Bacon Flavor
116g P92.50/bot
Bacos Bits, Bacon Flavor
125g P92.50/bot

Kraft
Miniature Fun Mallows,
Miniature Jet-Puffed Marsmallows
297g P68.25/pk

Kraft
Jet-Puffed Marsmallows
283g P68.25/pk

Planters
Creamy Peanut Butter,
Crunchy Peanut Butter
510g P108.50/bot
340g P85.50/bot

B2B-9BK
Bird Cage P1,575.00/ea
CD4
Pet Carrier Deluxe P1,050.00/ea

Colgate
Flouride Toothpaste Sensitive Fresh Stripe
130g P173.75/tube
Total Clean Mint, Total Whitening
160g P68.95/tube

Close-Up
Toothpaste Red Hot, Menthol Chill
150ml P70.35/tube
Dove
Daily Beauty Bar Soap 100g P40.35/pc

Lactacyd
Natural Skin Cleansing & Protection Blue
250ml P158.50/bot
Feminine Wash, Confidence Bloom
120ml P94.50/bot
Feminine Hygiene Fresh Radiance, Pink
P145.25/bot

Purex
Gel Azul Bleach
900ml P36.50/bot 450ml P22.50/bot
225ml P13.50/bot 90ml P8.25/bot

Ariel
Detergent Powder Ultramatic
1.6kg P291.50/pk
Freshness of Downy, Sunshine of Downy
1.6kg P324.65/pk
Original Scent 900g P154.75/pk

Lysol
Disinfectant Spray Spring Waterfall,
Country Scent, Crisp Linen,
Original Scent 340g P204.50/bot

Raid Multi Insect Killer w/ Lavender
300ml P126.25/bot 600ml P181.25/bot
Pledge Lemon Furniture Polish 330ml P162.50/bot
Glade Sport Platinum car Perfume Cool Air,
Blue Silver Primary 7ml P147.50/bot
Lady Car perfume Pink Passion Primary
P117.50/pc

Makati Supermart Alabang • Theater Drive bet. Commerce Ave., Alabang Town Center, Alabang-Zapote Road, [illegible]
Unimart • Greenhills Shopping Center • Tels. 721-0592; 721-1717 • Store Hours: 9:30 am - 9:00 pm Cash&Carry Supermarket • [illegible]

Bag the big savings at SM Supermalls on March 2, 3 & 4

2 WAYS TO WIN

FILL UP RAFFLE COUPON OR TEXT SM TO 2366

3-Day Sale shoppers at SM City Manila, SM Southmall and SM City Pampanga get the chance to win one of 60 units of **Xtreme Magic Sing MP3 players** at stake in the March 4 & 5 draws.

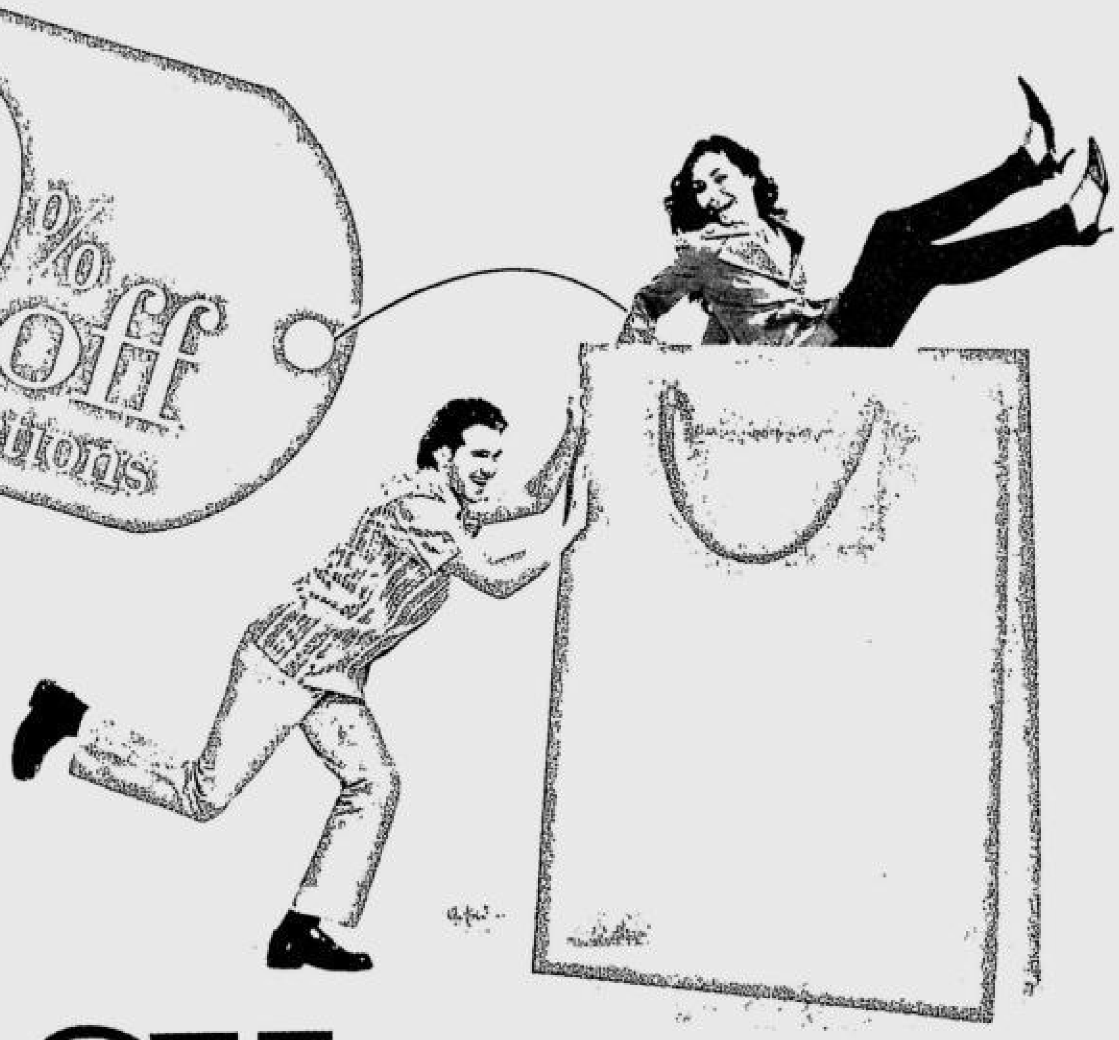
Every P500 single-receipt purchase (cash or charge) from SM Department Store, SM Supermarket or from any participating mall establishment (food or non-food) entitles shoppers to their choice of promo entries, namely:

① **raffle coupon,** which they can fill out and drop at designated drop boxes; or

② **texting SM to 2366** for their electronic entry.

Raffle coupon draws will be held on March 4 at 10 pm at the Event Center of each participating mall, while the electronic draws will be held at 5 pm on March 5 at the ABS-CBN Interactive Office, 9th floor, ELJ Communications Center Bldg., Mother Ignacia Avenue, South Triangle, Quezon City. All winners can only win once.

Up to 50% off great selections



3 day SALE

march 2 • 3 • 4

Mall hours: **10am - 10pm**

3 days of cool deals on great selections await shoppers during the weekend sale of **SM City Manila, SM Southmall** in Las Piñas, and **SM City Pampanga** in San Fernando.

An exciting mix of merchandise and services are showcased at up to **50% off!**

Downtown shopping at SM City Manila

Have a good time sale-shopping at the SM mall that reflects the glory days of a proud and historic city. Special finds are up for grabs at participating stores mallwide, while **SM Department Store, SM Supermarket** and **SM Food Court** continue to provide shoppers with the best buys in terms of quality, freshness and prices.

Check out a movie at **SM Cinema.**

SM Southmall Las Piñas
Value plus fun

Shop south and bag the cool deals at SM Southmall's 3-Day Sale. Meet to eat at **SM Food Court**. Cap your shopping with a magical adventure at **SM Storyland**, located at the upper ground floor. Also check out **Toy Kingdom** on the same floor for the latest arrivals. Both are guaranteed to give the whole family hours of amazing fun.

Watch a movie at **SM Cinema.**

Dog owners can bring their pets on March 4 for free grooming at the Ultimate PETONE Dog Care on Wheels event at **Ace Hardware,** located at the Upper Ground Floor, East Hallway.

Great eats & wholesome relaxation
SM City Pampanga

Unbeatable price-offs on the widest merchandise mix are in store for residents of San Fernando and neighboring towns. After a shopping sortie, shoppers are invited to sample their tempting array of Pampangueño delicacies and international dishes at **SM Food Court.**

Meanwhile, the luxurious seating amenities and wide-screen facilities of **SM Cinema** invites mallers to relax and enjoy the latest movies in airconditioned comfort.

SM SUPERMALLS

MANILA • SOUTHMALL • PAMPANGA

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0668, Series of 2007

Per DTI-PGA Permit No. 023/024, Series of 2007

FILL UP RAFFLE COUPON OR TEXT SM TO 2366 & GET A CHANCE TO WIN 1 OF 20 MP3 PLAYERS PER MALL

with every P500 single receipt purchase

See mechanics poster for details

from the makers of XTREME MAGIC SING

MODELS gather after the show with Peter Jentes and Gary Flores in the garden of Chito Collantes' home.

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle
Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Designers and models who rode high during the era of luncheon fashion shows reunited for a long overdue tribute

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

One fab reunion where models glided

THE LANAI OF CHITO MADRIGAL **Collantes'** home turned into a fashion salon Thursday last week for the fashion reunion of the Hyatt crowd of the '70s and '80s.

It was a highly select crowd made up of designers and models who rode high in that era, and a few of the guests who went to their daily luncheon series.

Seated on tiffany chairs around the red carpet were Ms Collantes herself flanked by former Foreign Affairs Secretary **Domingo Siazon** and his wife **Kay**, who strode across the carpet to greet **Manuel Collantes**, the man of the house and a former Foreign Affairs minister; **Imelda Cojuangco, Chitang Nakpil Guerrero** with daughter **Lizza** (whom I hadn't seen in ages since our Journal days), **Doody Tuason, Raul Sunico** who performed before the show, the Madrigals—**Chuchu** (with husband **Mandy**), **Tana** and **Jamby**. Right behind Ms Collantes were **Menchu Katigbak** and **Suzie Ortigas**.

Curiously, a nurse would hold up a placard behind Ms Collantes that read "No Kissing." We thought that was part of the show until **Mary de Leon Rufino** explained before the show that they were giving that gracious reminder in view of Ms Collantes' frail health. So no *beso-beso* (although she did a few).

Obviously happy that night were the honorees of Ms Collantes who got teary-eyed at some moments, namely former Hyatt general manager **Peter Jentes** and fashion director **Gary Flores** who flew in from Virginia for this tribute.

Bobby Caballero, Oskar Atendido, Tony Cajucom—who were identified with Tower Hotel in those days—**Boysie Villavicencio** and **Celine Magat Lopez** put together this affair.

Gracing the runway again, after two decades, to model at least one gown each, were **Bessie Badilla** (who also emceed), **Minnie Cagatao Jentes, Celine Magat Lopez, Ces Artadi, Margie Floirendo, Marimi de la Fuente, Ping Federis** and **Wanda Louwallien.**

ONE FAB/ G2

CES Artadi in a Ben Farrales

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Air Philippines
7% discount on Published Fares (website or textsite bookings only)

DAVID'S SALON
15% discount on facial and hair services (cash transactions)

ALL THE WAY LBC
$5.00/USD discount on international outbound transactions only for a min. $12.00/USD transaction (not applicable to Jumbo Box, Jumbo Jr. and Express Pallet)

Goldilocks
5% discount on Greeting Cakes

hbc
Free gift with a minimum purchase of Php 125.00

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As per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0088. Series of 2007.

One fab reunion where models glided

From page G1

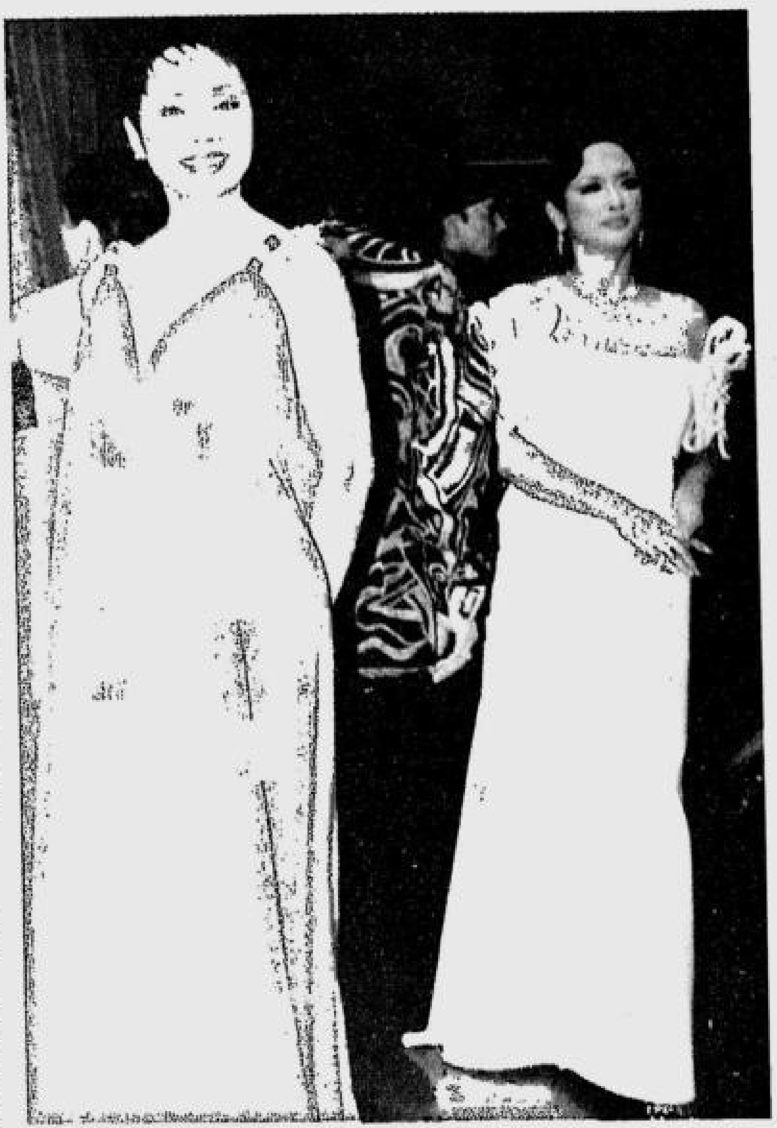
Wanda's daughters, **Ana** and **Chris**, were with us, cheering their mom on. It was their first time to see their mom model; they were still babies in those years.

Also modeling were **Susan Reyes** (in a Larrie Silva), **Anna Francisco** (here from San Fran), **Yvonne del Prado**, **Derek Carmona**, **Don Gallardo**, and of course **Lani Aquino** (whom I got so used to seeing in **Budji**'s showroom that I had forgotten she was once a model).

They wore gowns by **Tony**, **Boysie**, **Ben Farrales**, **Tonichi** (men's wear), **Cesar Gaupo**, **Steve de Leon**, **Loretto**, among others.

I brought our 21-year-old fashion acolyte along, a new grad named **Andrea de Guzman**, so she could see an era quite gone. Wide-eyed, she said of the models: "They don't walk. They glide!"

MS CHITO Madrigal Collantes, Ambassador Domingo Siazon and wife Kay, Imelda Cojuangco



MINNIE Cagatao Jentes in a Cesar Gaupo. Behind her is Mara Spirig Nasrabadi in a Boysie Villavicencio.

TV moment

The week has been one television moment, from the **Kris-James** episodes to the red-carpet spectacle of the Oscars.

Sunday evening, a tennis buddy texted while watching the Yaps' drama play out on **Korina Sanchez**'s heart-stopper: "Aren't there more important national issues?"

We asked, "You're watching?" But of course he was and so was his wife, our other tennis mate, and we're sure countless others. (In Camarines Sur, the newest "in" destination for wakeboarding, friends told us they couldn't access TV in their villas so they resorted to texting.)

From that glued-to-the-couch mode, we stepped out to dinner at Filo's for chef **Ed Quimson**'s birthday (whose packaged sausage/corned beef/pate line for **Katrina Enrile**'s food firm Delimondo is a hit in Salcedo's Saturday Market), and who should we find at our table? Dr. **Vicki Belo**. Listening to her wasn't just a couch experience, it was more like having a front-row ticket to the whole thing.

We sense there are many women out there who can empathize with Kris, or who at least want to see her and her baby safely through childbirth. If there's one "Oprah moment" in the life of the country's most famous celeb, this is it.

"Why should it always be the woman who comes under great scrutiny?" our female friend asked. "How about the men?"

"That's because we're used to cutting our men some slack," said another.

Of course, I said, Filipino mothers (including me) spoil their sons, who in turn are expected to be spoiled by their girlfriends, and later, wives. Pampered and spoiled emotionally, psychologically, in every sense. It's as if this pattern were stamped on the Filipino man's DNA.

"Uh, excuse me, we beg to disagree," our male friend wanted to cut in. You think we let him get a word in?

SUSAN Reyes in a Larrie Silva

Mild Oscars

In contrast to our local TV, the red carpet of the Oscars was, if you agree with Women's Wear Daily (WWD), so "safe."

"Girls Gone Mild," went the title of the WWD review of the Oscars look—mostly strapless sheaths with fishtail hem. It wrote: "After six weeks of parties, award shows and hoopla, the actual Academy Awards almost seemed an anticlimax. The stars toed the line on Sunday, with barely an inch of wiggle room. Skintight, razor-sharp strapless sheaths in every color of the rainbow dominated the red carpet. But when everyone starts looking the same, it borders on becoming the dreaded S-word: Safe."

But then from the Golden Globes to the Oscars, you could glean trends, if you watched closely: white is so in, and so are metallics. Accessorizing is down to a bangle, a bracelet, or earrings. You don't ladle them on anymore.

It was so amusing how TV's "Fashion Police" would suck up to the stars in the red carpet interview, then literally do a 180-degree-turn and demolish the star's look. Glamour and cruelty—a most potent mix.

AFTER the show, standing, from left, Jentes, Tony Cajucom, Bobby Caballero, Boysie Villavicencio, Celine Magat Lopez, Oskar Atendido; seated, Gary Flores and Ms. Madrigal-Collantes

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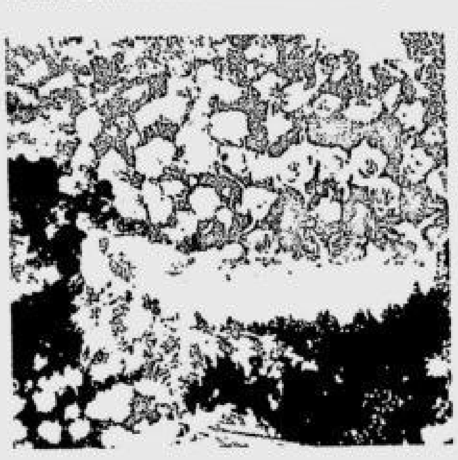
GOINGS ON

PWU alumni reunion March 3

THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY marks its 88th year with an alumni reunion at 1 p.m., March 3, at Mira-Nila, the Benitez ancestral residence in Quezon City. Theme of the event is "Celebrating the PWU's Collective Achievement in Transformative Education." Leading this year's golden jubilarians (Class '57) are PWU President Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes; Irene Morada Santiago, chair and CEO of Mindanao Commission on Women; and Nelia Villarama Sigggaoat of Manel's Leathergoods. Silver jubilarians are members of Class '82. The celebration begins with a Mass to be officiated by university chaplain Msgr. Hernando Coronel at the Mira-Nila Holy Family Chapel, followed by a fellowship. Call 5242610 or 5268421 loc. 111 or e-mail oceleste92@yahoo.com, Olivia-celeste @gmail, or olivia_celestemv@gmail.com; and annaileto@yahoo.com.

HOMECOMING. La Consolacion College Manila will have its 81st Grand Alumnae Homecoming March 10. Call Max Muldong at 7360235 local 109 or Gina Dimaandal at 0906-4939441 or 0922-8760905 or e-mail ginadimaandal@yahoo.com.

BIKINI FRENZY SCREENING. Screening of official candidates for Bikini Frenzy 2007 will be held 1-5 p.m., March 9-10, at the Wallstreet Function Room, 3/F Astoria Plaza Hotel, 15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. The annual search for summer great bodies is organized by the Golden Sunset Resort in Calatagan, Batangas. Participants are between 18-25 years old, male or female, at least 5 feet tall, of good moral character with a positive attitude, healthy with a great face and body. Official candidates will be presented to the media March 17. Other activities are: sports fest—March 24; talent competition—April 14; fashion show in a Boracay resort—April 28. The grand finals will be held May 12 at the Amphitheater of Golden Sunset Resort.



BAGUIO FESTIVAL. The annual Panagbenga Festival in Baguio City featured floats with creative flower arrangements. SM held a mall-wide sale. A photo exhibit was also held. Car enthusiasts can enjoy the first "SM Baguio Transhow" until March 3 at the Rambakan Drive. Musar Music will feature piano recitals 11 a.m.-4 p.m., March 3, at the Atrium of SM City Baguio. Capping the festivities is the Floriade Street Party with Parokya ni Edgar 7 p.m., March 4, at the Rambakan Drive.

TRAVEL EXPO. Enchanted Kingdom participates in the "2nd TravelXchange, Sports and Wellness Expo 2007" March 2-4 at Robinsons Place Mall, Bacolod City. An Enchanted Kingdom booth (032-2317673 or 0922-8262128) will be set up at the travel fair.

GRADUATION SALE. Plaza Fair is holding a graduation showcase sale. Up to 50 percent discount is offered on selected items. Check out the store's new items for summer.

THREE-DAY FAIR. The Podium, with the New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, the New Zealand Embassy and the Philippines-New Zealand Business Council, presented the "New Zealand Festival." The event featured exhibits, entertainment and fashion events. Other festival highlights were New Zealand Cultural Dance and a mini fashion show. Until March 9, shoppers have a chance to win a trip to New Zealand via Air New Zealand in a raffle. Every P1,000 worth of purchase from any Podium establishment entitles a customer to a raffle coupon. Raffle draw is at 3 p.m., March 10.

SEMINARS. CFS Creative Training and Management (tel. 8697960, 8232358 or 8234825) will hold the following seminars: "Effective Busines Correspondence" (9 a.m.-5 p.m., March 7); "Production Planning and Control Course" (9 a.m.-5 p.m., March 9-10); "Effective Business Communication" (9 a.m.-5 p.m., March 15-16); "Warehouse Management" (March 17); "Service Synergy for Customer Care" (March 21); "Risk-based Management" (March 22-23).

DONATION TO PONDONG PINOY
Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales (left) receives from Felicidad Sy proceeds of a charity dinner for the benefit of the Pondong Pinoy held during the opening of the Tagaytay Highlands Steakhouse at the SM Mall of Asia. The Pondong Pinoy project helps the less fortunate in the Archdiocese of Manila.

WORKSHOP. A 20-hour transformative workshop that includes meditation, light yoga and lectures, will be held 7-10:30 p.m., March 5-10 at the 6/F Tuscany Apts., Ayala Avenue, Makati City; call 0916-3219223.

HARDWARE FAIR. Handyman's Hardware Fair, Big Ideas Simple Solutions is ongoing until March 10. Offering the widest array of hardware items and products for the home, it will be held simultaneously at mall activity areas of Robinsons Place Pioneer, Mandaluyong City; Robinsons Metro East, Robinsons Place Novaliches and Robinsons Starmills Pampanga.

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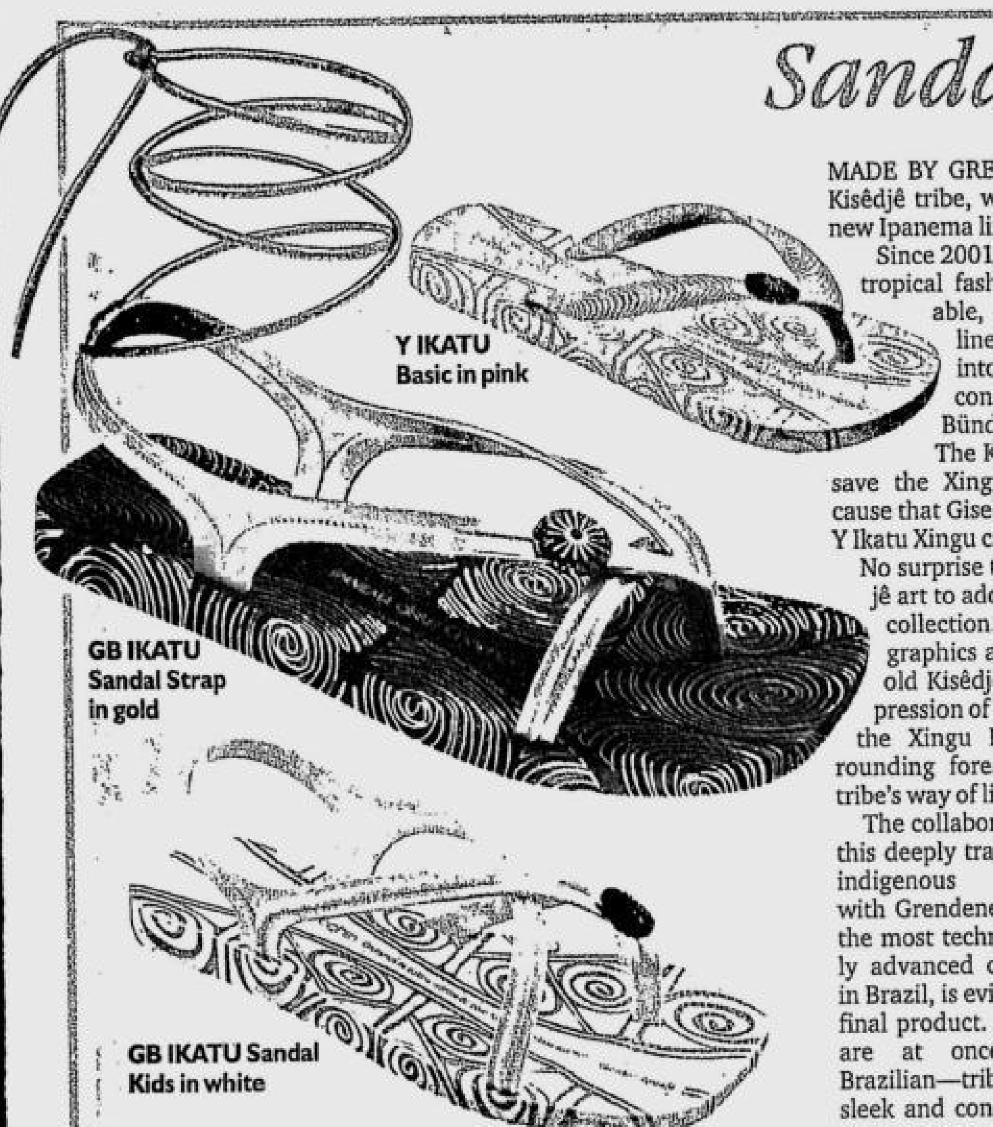
Sandals that stand for something



Y IKATU Basic in pink

GB IKATU Sandal Strap in gold

GB IKATU Sandal Kids in white

MADE BY GRENDENE, DESIGNED BY THE Kisêdjê tribe, worn by Gisele Bündchen, the new Ipanema line is now in the Philippines.

Since 2001, Ipanema has been known for tropical fashion footwear that's comfortable, casual and chic. For its 2007 lineup, Ipanema digs even deeper into its Brazilian roots and social conscience for the Ipanema Gisele Bündchen line.

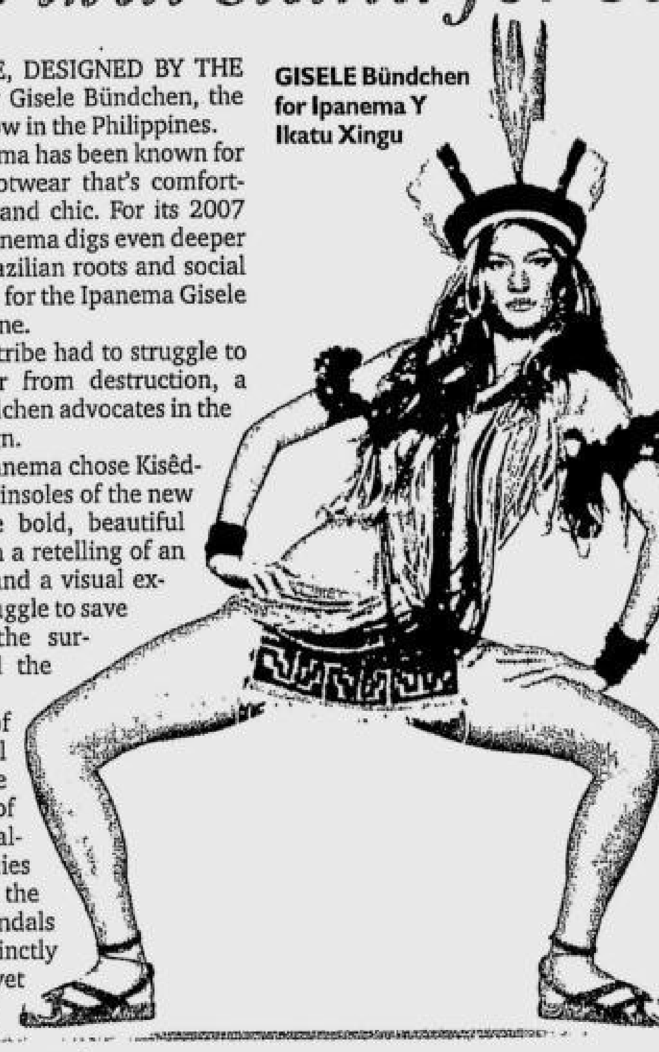
The Kisêdjê tribe had to struggle to save the Xingu River from destruction, a cause that Gisele Bündchen advocates in the Y Ikatu Xingu campaign.

No surprise that Ipanema chose Kisêdjê art to adorn the insoles of the new collection. These bold, beautiful graphics are both a retelling of an old Kisêdjê tale and a visual expression of the struggle to save the Xingu River, the surrounding forests and the tribe's way of life.

The collaboration of this deeply traditional indigenous people with Grendene, one of the most technologically advanced companies in Brazil, is evident in the final product. The sandals are at once distinctly Brazilian—tribal yet sleek and contemporary. They're stylish. They're comfortable. They make you look good. But more importantly, they make you see. They are a reminder of the struggle going on to save the environment in Brazil and in other parts of the world.

Since a portion of the profits from Ipanema Gisele Bündchen sales go to the Y Ikatu Xingu campaign, purchasing these sandals means joining the fight of the Kisédjê, Gisele Bündchen and Grendene.

So when you step into a pair of Ipanema Gisele Bündchen, walk tall. You're standing for something.



GISELE Bündchen for Ipanema Y Ikatu Xingu

BÜNDCHEN takes the cudgels for the Kisêdjê tribe in its campaign to save the Xingu River.

Elegance in subtle details

RED remains strong this season. Highlight your style with a red leather jacket and pumps.

FEMININE, filigree, and fragile—knit pullover and cardigan

HIGH-WAISTED ¾-length pants evoke a figure-flattering silhouette.

LAURÈL SHIFTS TO SUBTLE DETAILS AND A subdued look for its Spring/Summer 2007 Collection. Appliqués and decorations are on the quiet, delicate side, while maintaining the luxurious feel of haute couture.

Laurèl draws inspiration from sensuous Buenos Aires in this latest collection, hinting at a fusion between Spanish sensuality and 1930s femininity. Reduced ruffles and flounces contrast with figure-flattering and feminine silhouettes evoked by pencil skirts and high-waisted, ¾-length pants.

The collection also indulges in the classic aesthetic of black and white—from mini dots to blowup ornaments. Still strong this season, ruby red adds passionate accents.

A quaint seaside resort with Victorian flair, Brighton also demonstrates its influence in Laurèl's Spring/Summer offering with suits presented in new fabric looks laden with discreet prints.

Modern jacquard is visible in the collection, while knitwear is feminine and fragile.

The Laurèl shop is at 3/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall in Mandaluyong.

Classic yet casual

PIERRE CARDIN RECENTLY OPENED ITS first free-standing store at The Block (SM North Edsa) and a second shop at SM Mall of Asia.

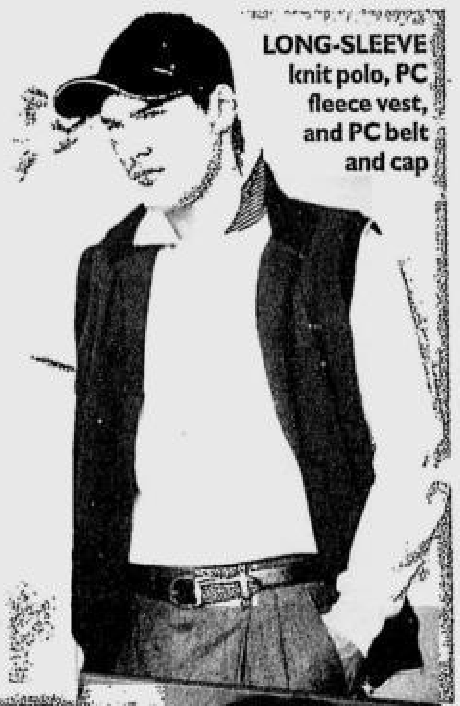
A name synonymous with high-quality menswear, Pierre Cardin offers clothing described as classic menswear with a twist, simple yet tailored.

The shop offers an array of collections from casual (T-shirts, caps and pants) to formal wear (short- and long-sleeve woven tops, suits and slacks); from accessories (wallets, belts, neckties, hankies, socks and boxer shorts) to outer wear such as jackets and sweaters to complete the look. Its woven tops, luxurious knits, and beautifully cut suits and separates capture seasonal trends.

Pierre Cardin's summer collection is mostly in pastel-colored hues with a touch of geometrical lines.

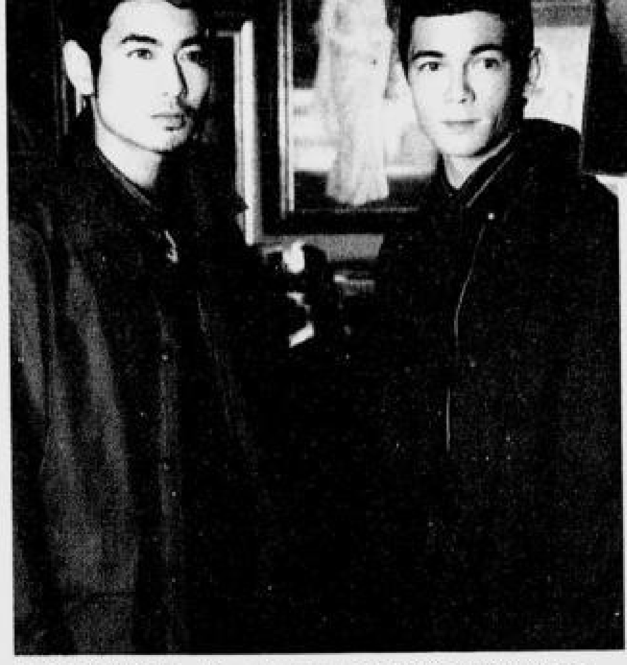
Short-sleeve shirts and long-sleeve polo in fluid stripes and checkered patterns are classically simple and neat, while the khaki pants and jeans are great to pair with tees and polo shirts, creating looks that are professional yet also young and fun-loving.

Cinderella is the exclusive franchise holder of Pierre Cardin in the Philippines. Pierre Cardin Stores are located at The Block in SM North Edsa and at 2/F Mall of Asia. Also available at the following Cinderella Stores: Alabang, Festival Mall, North Mall (Glorietta), SM Megamall, Virramall, North Edsa and Robinsons Ermita.



LONG-SLEEVE knit polo, PC fleece vest, and PC belt and cap

PIERRE Cardin long-sleeve shirt and khaki PC casual pants



LONG-SLEEVE striped woven top, PC jacket in teflon semi-waterproof fabric, and casual pants; at right, pink PC short-sleeve woven top and khaki casual pants with stripe detail

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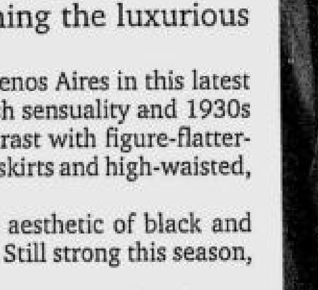

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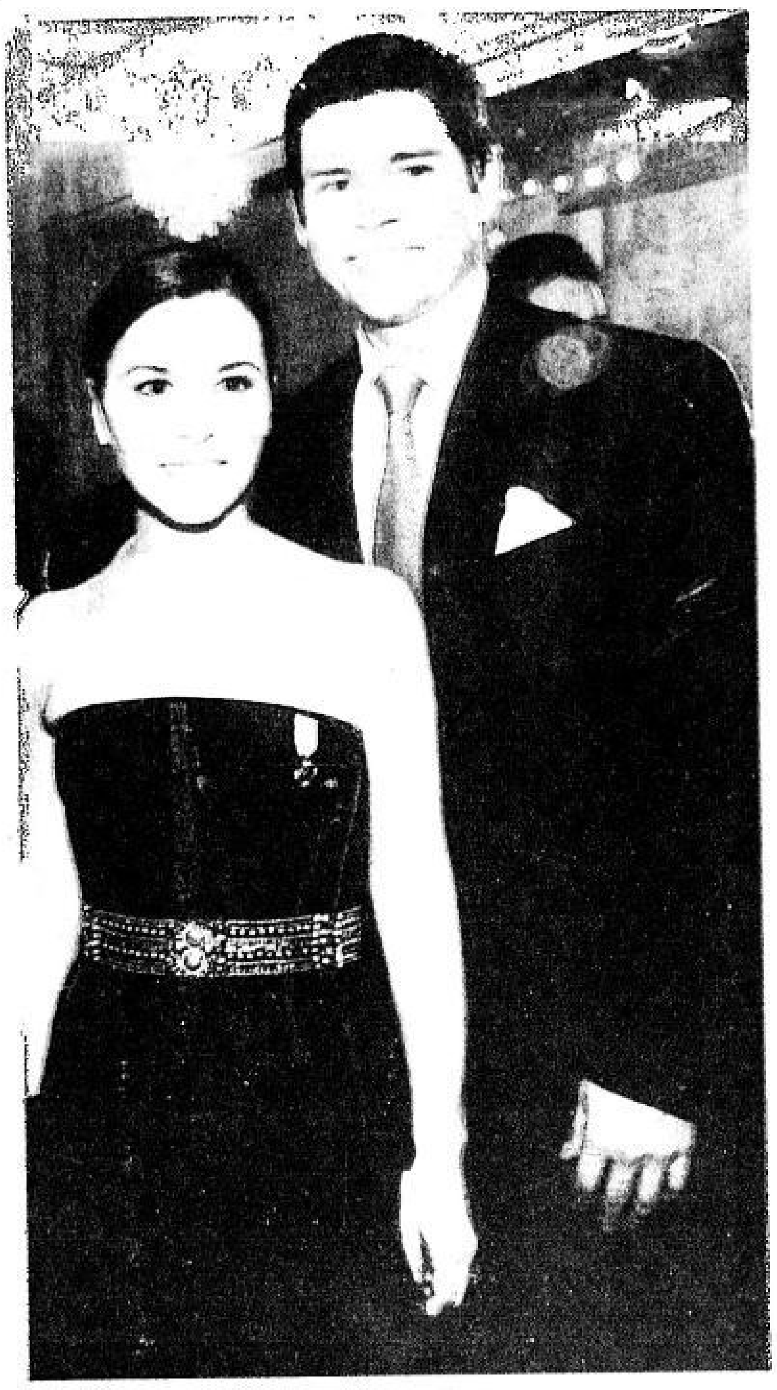
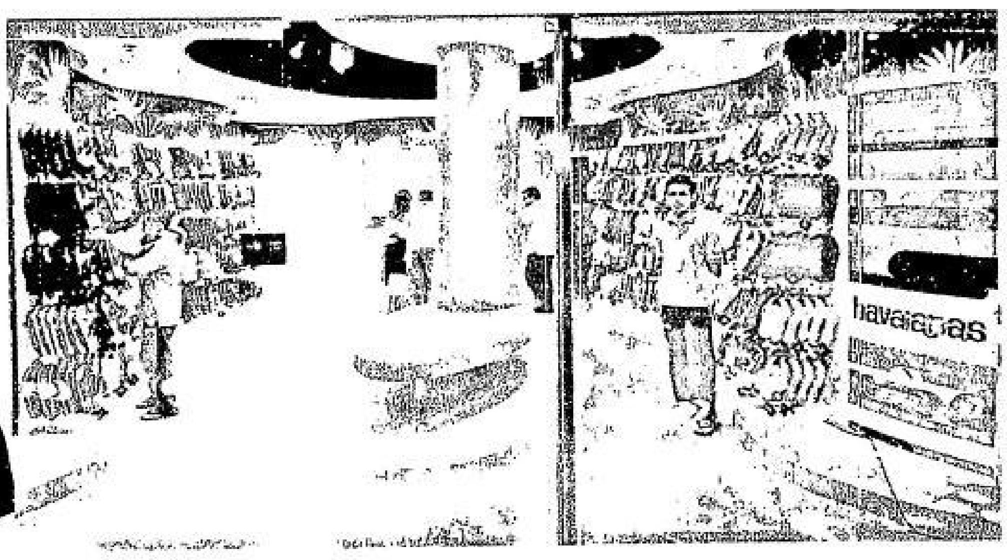

MONIQUE Lhuillier and husband Tom Bugbee

BAG designer Tina Ocampo

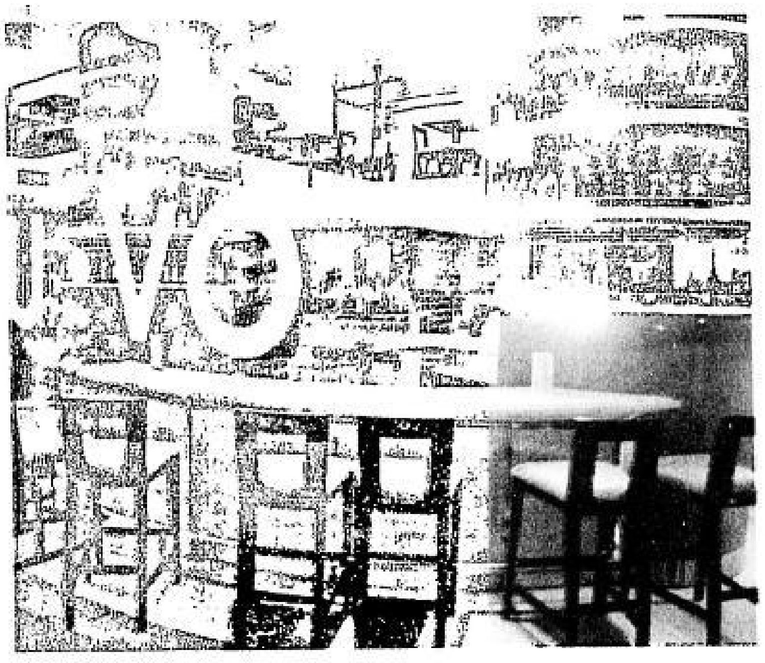
MASTER retailer Ben Chan

THE MISS behind the success story of Balducci and L'Opera, Abba Napa

MELLIE Romero A. and husband Louie Ablaza



HAVAIANAS flip-flops store



NUVO bar and resto

SILK chef Cecille Ysmael

The best of the best

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

THE BEST-ATTENDED FASHION shows in 2006 included **Monique Lhuillier's**, in which the US-based designer gathered the cream of the crop from Manille and Cebu in an elegant fashion-show-and-dinner affair.

Still the reigning Prince of Alta Moda, **Inno Sotto** held a fabulous fashion show at the Ayala Triangle. Manille's well-heeled set couldn't get enough of his super 2006 collection.

Master retailer **Ben Chan's** Bench underwear and jeans show was witnessed by a fully packed house at the colossal Araneta Coliseum.

Metro Magazine's four-week Metro Wear fashion series featured hotshot couturiers, new designers, and **Cesar Gaupo's** shoes at the Rockwell Tent.

Best cell phones

It was neck and neck year between Nokia and Motorola. Nokia held the super launching of its N93 at Ayala Museum.

Motorola held its yearly bash at the eye-catching Nami beach resort in Boracay. Its latest Motokrzr cell phones were given to lucky invitees.

Nokia's Black party at Cuisine and Embassy saw tons of guests dressed in black, *natch*, and receiving Nokia's newest N Series cell phones.

Motorola also launched its Motokrzr at the Rockwell Tent where some 100 lucky invitees out of 200 received the latest eye-catching cell phones.

MOTOROLA

Without batting an eyelash, I would say the best drink of the year is the bubbly champagne. Champagne "puts a twinkle in your eye and a song in your heart. Life looks better with bubbles," dahlings.

In this connection, Vevue Clicquot and Moet & Chandon are the favorite champagnes of the year.

KLM gave the best airline bash, the best show, the best cocktail finger food, the best giveaways (20 awesome business-class tickets to Amsterdam and other points of Europe) during its 55th anniversary at the Conservatory of the Peninsula Manila.

The best flip-flops are none other than the internationally renowned Havaianas. The product from Brazil took the jet-set by storm.

Also to be noted is the new entry, Crocs. They're so comfy and come in different shapes and colors.

For the best new restaurants, definitely one of them would be Thai Silk in Serendra. It had our town's true gourmands queuing just to get a table. Brilliant **Cecille Chang Ysmael** is doing wonders in her resto after several years of training in Thailand.

The excellent Balducci Restaurante, also in Serendra, sweeps one away to beautiful Tuscany. It has an Italian bistro atmosphere and the delectable aroma of the best of Tuscany's dishes. One would definitely go back to savor the delicious choices in the menu.

Steak House was another new resto in Serendra that caused tidal waves with its excellent menu such as its superb Tagalog Beef Steak and Lapu-lapu. The choices of steaks are unbelievable, but at the top of the list would be the steak with foie gras and steak with escargot.

The phenomenal Nanohana Japanese Restaurant at 130 Valero St., Salcedo Village, had Cosmo Manille going gaga over the excellent, superb dishes flown in direct from Japan, and prepared by great Japanese chefs. One had to make reservations in advance to get in. It was always a full-house affair, dahlings.

Best bars, restos

Nuvo, at Greenbelt 2, was still the *numero uno* bar in the city. At its helm was the King of the Night Life, **Louie Ysmael**, still the major reason for Nuvo's staying power.

Bobong Velez got Mezze, also at Greenbelt 2, on a roll with a fantastic opening. It offered the original recipes of the defunct Doña Nena Resto, owned by his grandmother. The resto was known for the after-dinner sounds played by guest DJs.

Mezze, this chic resto/bar, packed them like sardines. The excellent menu, superbly prepared by chef **Fernando Aracama**, would have our town's gourmands going back for more. Apres dinner, there would be party music and terrific DJ sounds. Guests would rub elbows with the beautiful faces of The Fort.

NOKIA N series

Capone at Fraiser Place, Valero St., Salcedo Village, was the favorite late-hour place by night owls. With main man **Jay Server**, the place would still be full of energy and life even way past Cinderella's bedtime.

Among dance clubs, Embassy was the royalty of them all, dahlings. You could dance with the crowd on the dance floor. Or you might prefer the VIP room, for more shoulder room. Meanwhile, at the Prive room, you could sit and chat while listening to dance tunes.

One could find Pier One in Boracay and The Fort. Last year, it opened at Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati. Great food, great sounds and great place to dance.

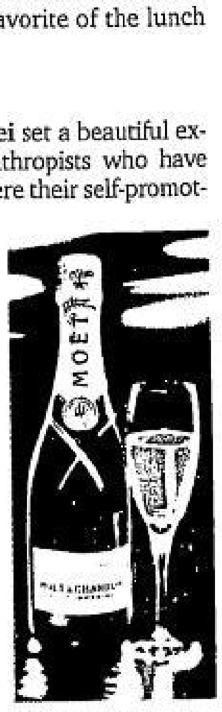
The fabulous Restaurant & Bar row at Serendra was the place to see and be seen in. It has since become the favorite of the lunch and dinner bunch.

Best personalities

Taipan **John Gokongwei** set a beautiful example to so-called philanthropists who have never put their money where their self-promoting mouth is by not only donating to schools, but also giving away P10.25 billion of his personal holdings in his *famille's* conglomerate to educational charities.

Old-wealth socialite **Mely Concepcion** was the *numero uno* hostess of Cosmo Manille, entertaining endlessly visiting dignitaries from all over the world.

Another hostess with the mostest was **Mellie Romero Ablaza**, who organized grandiose balls and entertained the diplomatic corps.



MOET & Chandon Brut Imperial glass

Another top personality was **Meldy Cojuangco**, who was a dedicated charity fundraiser and patroness of the arts.

Top bag designers were **Tina Ocampo** and **Bea Valdez**, who conquered the international fashion scene with their collection of gorgeous evening hand bags that were featured in Vogue. Bea's jewelry were also featured in the mag.

Best sportsman was international billiards king **Efren "Bata" Reyes**.

And finally, the best slap of the year was the one given by **Vina Morales** to the rubber mouth of you know who.

HAPPY FACES. KLM awarded business-class tickets to 55 winners on its 55th anniversary celebration.

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2007
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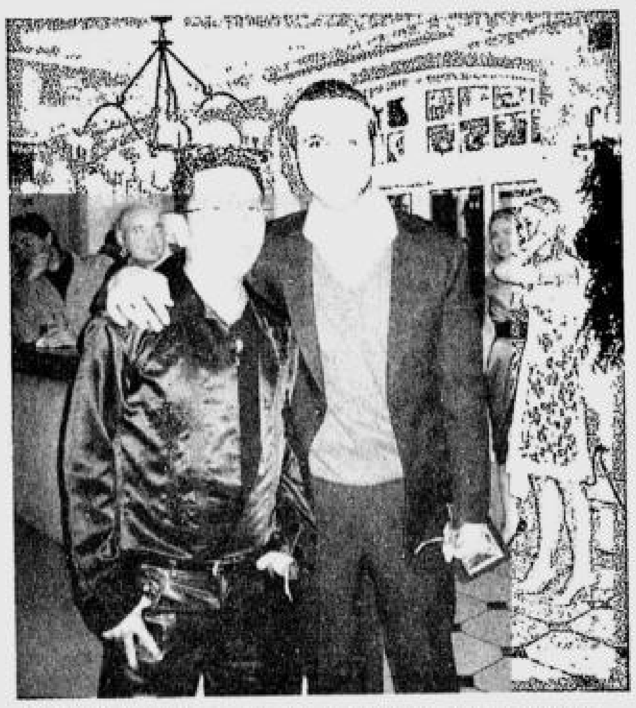


AURAEUS Solito and Best Actor winner Ryan Gosling ("Half Nelson") at the after-party. PHOTOS BY RUBEN V. NEPALES

SPIRIT AWARDS

FIL-AM actress L.A. Renigen and Richard Wong. She stars in his "Colma: The Musical," which won him a nomination for this year's Someone to Watch Award. Another Fil-Am, H.P. Mendoza, wrote and composed the score.

RP film pitted against Oscar winner

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

Auraeus Solito's Spirit Awards nomination was a big deal

LOS ANGELES—JUST HOW IMPORtant an honor was it for **Auraeus Solito** to be nominated in the Best Foreign Film category (the award is given to the director) at the Film Independent's Spirit Awards held last weekend?

The Filipino filmmaker, cited for his first feature, "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," was up against Germany's **Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck**, who won the award. The following day, Florian, vying for the same film, "The Lives of Others," triumphed again at the Oscars.

Auraeus was in great company. His fellow nominees were: **Rachid Bouchareb** (France/Morocco/Algeria/Belgium)–"Days of Glory" won the François Chalais Award, and its male ensemble cast, the Best Actor Award at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival; Conerliu Prumboiu (Romania)–"12:08 East of Bucharest" bagged the Camera d'Or prize, also in Cannes last year; and Israel Adrian Caetano (Argentina)–nominated for Cannes' top prize, Golden Palm, also in Cannes 2006.

This latest feat of the Pinoy filmmaker was a big deal. Auraeus and his little film, written by **Michiko Yamamoto** and produced by **Raymond Lee**, has racked so many achievements that we may have become blasé to this recent honor. Let's not forget, too, that "Maxi," distributed in the US by Unitel Pictures, was the first Filipino film nominated at this awards event honoring the best indie films.

In the media tip sheet provided by Film Independent, the guests, nominees and special award recipients were listed alphabetically. After award-winning writer-director **Steven Soderbergh**'s name came "Auraeus Solito." How cool was that for us to see? So, to Auraeus: Bravo and *mabuhay*!

The fun part

That said, we can now go to the fun stuff. Auraeus probably had the distinction of being the only guest who did a wardrobe change for the after-party. *Bongga*! But we're getting ahead of the story.

Let's start with the Spirit Awards' unique location—right on the beach in Santa Monica.

On its 22nd year, the Awards, traditionally held on the eve of the Oscars, has become big. Trophies are served inside a tent just steps away from the sand but this is a huge white one. And there are rows of white-cloth covered tables elegantly set for lunch.

Outside is a cluster of smaller tents housing: the gift lounge where the likes of **Sharon Stone, Minnie Driver, Rosario Dawson and Lucy Liu** hoarded Ugg Boots, Palm Treo and many more; the Elle magazine green suite; separate booths for press and photogs; and a "cantina" serving lunch and drinks. And several Port-a-Potties—as we wrote last year, these are fancy ones complete with mirrors and carpets.

Pinoy hospitality

When we saw Auraeus and his guest and LA host, Fil-Am realtor **Peter (Dante) Tantiado**, he was done with the lunch of steak and salmon, washed down with wine. Lighting a Capri cigarette outside the main tent, he exclaimed, "*Sarap*!" He wore a gold barong by his favorite, **John Abul**, and his usual T'boli necklace and a crucifix necklace from his boyfriend, **Hai Balbuena**. Streaks of brown jazzed up his hair, thanks to a Fil-Am hair stylist who did it the previous evening.

He had gone through the red (blue, actually) carpet with Fil-Am publicist **Winston Emano**, who offered to walk him through the phalanx of media for free. So Auraeus told me that more than anything, he was touched by the Filipino community's support for him. **Lem Balagot**, a caterer and owner of LA Rose Café, even loaned him a cell phone for use during his stay.

Auraeus excitedly shared that **Ryan Fleck**, a Best Director nominee whose

RP FILM/ H4

Kris & James show

By Jose Javier Reyes
Contributor

THE IRONY WAS THAT, ON the 21st anniversary of the 1986 People Power Revolution, the attention of the public was not on the lackluster celebration at the Edsa Shrine. Rather, all eyes and ears were focused on what was deemed a much bigger event. This was the unfolding of yet another chapter in the *telenovela* life of Ninoy Aquino's youngest daughter.

Kris Aquino sprang to the blinding spotlight of Philippine media like Pallas Athena. Borne in full-gear on her father's martyrdom and the tidal wave of her widowed mother's popularity, Kris was the perfect warrior child born for the telecommunication. Thus, 21 years ago she was introduced as a sweet and fragile porcelain doll hiding behind spectacles, sniffling beside her sisters, victim of a regime reaching its cathartic end. Before the very eyes of millions of adoring Filipinos, she blossomed into this intelligent, eloquent and fearless daredevil personality who represented feisty youth, with just the right mixture of rebellion and etiquette.

And from the time she had a taste of the limelight, Filipinos could never have enough of Kris—and she could never have enough of us.

Very thin line

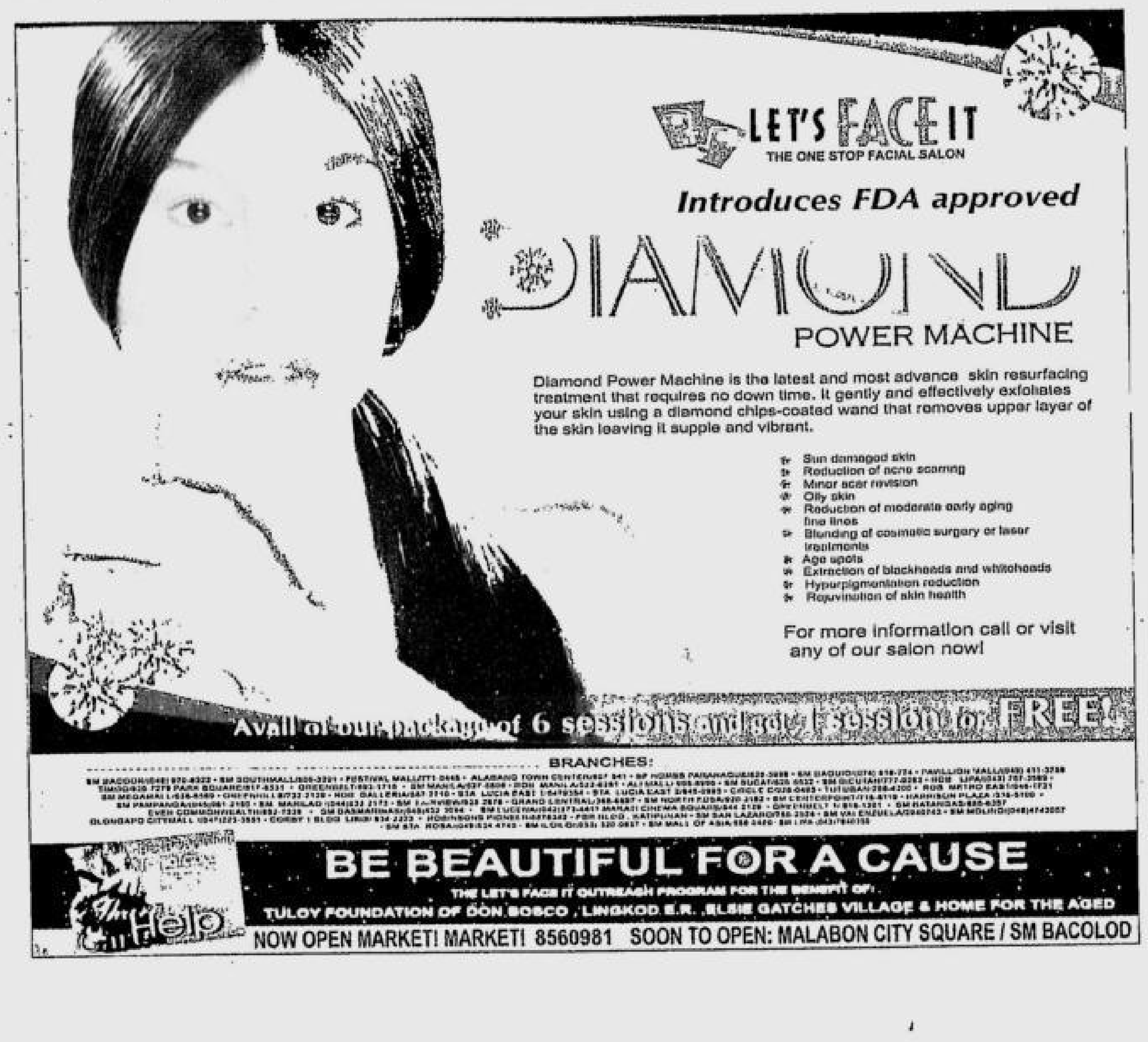
When President Cory's daughter entered the entertainment business, she became the personification of the welding of two powerful institutions—politics and show business. In a culture that often gives greater importance to celebrity rather than significance, a very thin line divided well-founded admiration and amusement at someone's ability to feed curiosities and fantasies. Never has it been enough for audiences to be in awe of what their idols have done, are doing, and can do. Apparently more important is how these idols amaze them, if incorrigibly, with accounts of misdemeanors.

In this age of instant gratification, sustained interest and continued success is achieved only if a media personality has the talent to constantly reinvent and consistently disturb and disrupt. Our popular culture is sadly founded on muck and scandal instead of achievement, and obsessed with vulgar intrusion in the guise of searching for truth.

Every other person with access to print and television wants to be a celebrity; nowadays this has become really easy. Reality TV has the power to pluck some lucky creature from utter obscurity and turn him or her into an overnight sensation. And what is reality TV but a protracted and even sadistic view of weaknesses, vul-

KRIS/ H2

A HAPPY couple not too long ago.



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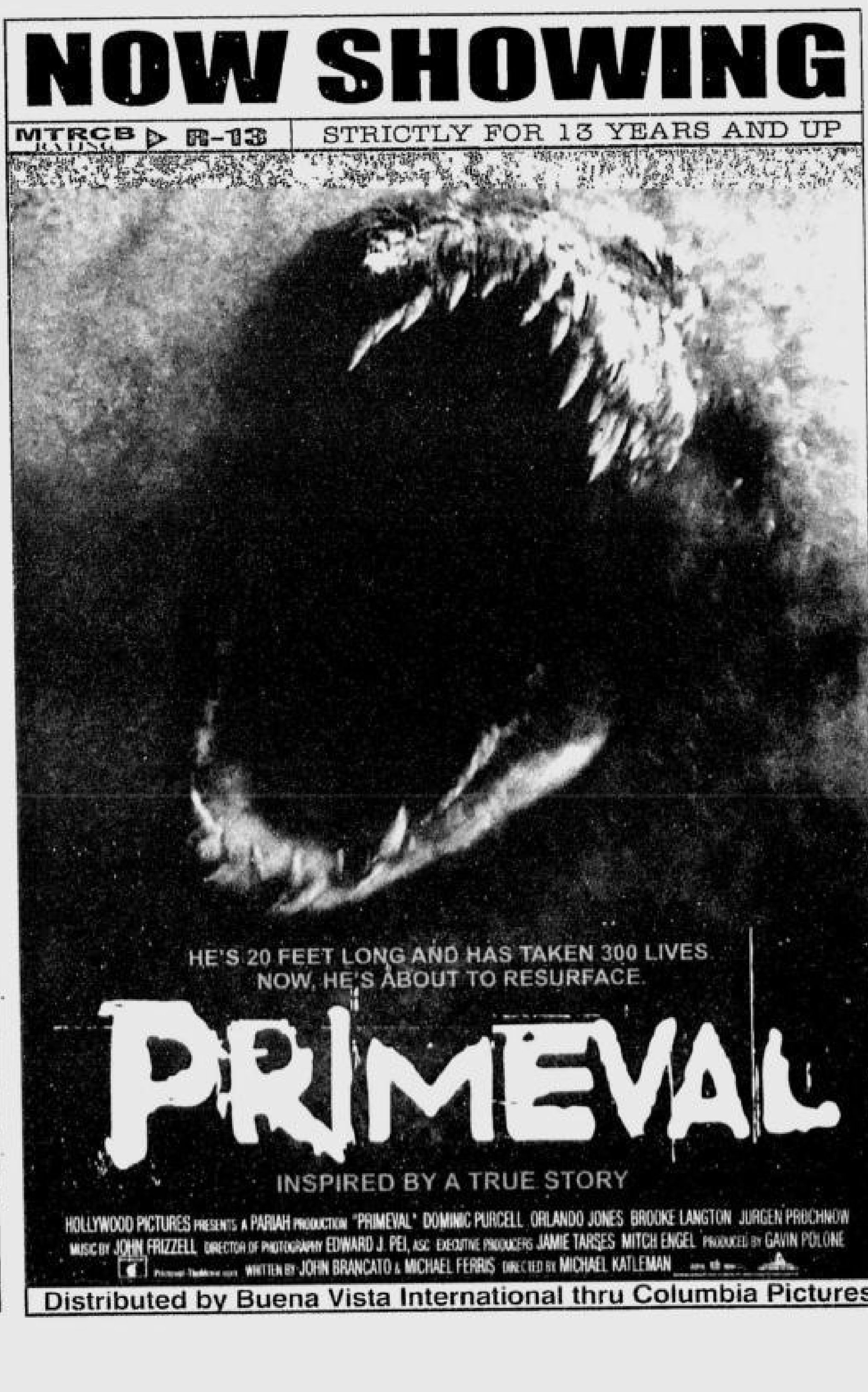

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www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA

Ticket Price THX:P161 131 indie Sine :101 632-9116

1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA • THX
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

2 YOU GOT ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 indieSine: PEPOT ARTISTA
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 FLUSHED AWAY
1:20 3:25 5:30 7:35 9:45

5 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

6 PRIMEVAL
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

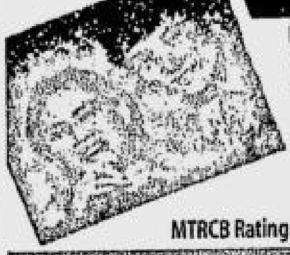
7 KABUL EXPRESS
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

8 EPIC MOVIE 12:30 2:40
MUSIC and LYRICS 5:00 7:20 9:40

9 GHOST RIDER
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

10 THE NUMBER 23
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

NOW SHOWING !



Doy Del Mundo's

PEPOT ARTISTA

Pepot Artista is a comedy-musical that focuses on a ten-year old boy whose dream is to become a movie star. Pepot, the dreamer, is surrounded by people who are equally dazzled by the movie world-from his own mother to the principal in his school to the impersonators in the neighborhood carnival. Coming from a poor family, Pepot overcomes adversity to have a chance at fulfilling his dream. He tackles school bullies, a strict teacher, and an unwelcoming world that fail to comprehend his intense desire to become a star.

MTRCB Rating: G

ONLY AT indieSine, Robinsons Movieworld Galleria!

ERMITA

Ticket Price:P110 536-7809 to 12

1 YOU GOT ME 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 THE NUMBER 23 12:30 2:50
BRIDGE to TERABITHIA 5:10 7:30 10:00

3 FLUSHED AWAY
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

4 EPIC MOVIE 12:00 1:40 3:20
GHOST RIDER 5:30 7:30 10:00

5 PRIMEVAL
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

7 ROME and JULIET
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

PREPARE FOR GLORY!

300

Schedule of Activities

Visit the "300" Photo Exhibit today at the Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Cinema Lobby

CAR STICK-ON EVENT
Robinsons Place, Manila
(P. Faura Wing)
MARCH 02 (Friday)

Robinsons Pioneer
(EDSA to Pioneer Side)
MARCH 03 (Saturday)

Tune in to Wave 89.1 and get a chance to win exclusive invites to the special advance screening of "300" and for more details on its activities and promos

OPENS MARCH 7 AT ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

METRO EAST

Ticket Price:P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE NUMBER 23
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

2 FLUSHED AWAY
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

3 YOU GOT ME
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

4 EPIC MOVIE
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:00

5 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

6 GHOST RIDER
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00

7 PRIMEVAL
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

8 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

NOVALICHES

Ticket Price:P 935-3231/936-3229-30

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 GHOST RIDER

PIONEER

Ticket Price:P102 687-6378

1 PRIMEVAL
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40

2 FLUSHED AWAY
12:20 2:25 4:30 6:35 8:40

3 YOU GOT ME
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40

STA. ROSA

Ticket Price:P75/80 (049) 837-0907

1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

LIPA

P.90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 TROIKA
5 BABEL

DASMARINAS

Ticket Price:P75/80 (046) 416-4332

1 BOA
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

ANGELES

Ticket Price: P.90 (045) 892-2348

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 TROIKA
4 THE FOUNTAIN

IMUS

Ticket Price:P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 PRIMENVAL
2 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

STARMILLS

Ticket Price: P75/80 (045) 875-1927

1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 TROIKA
3 THE PROMISE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 PRIMEVAL
6 GHOST RIDER

BACOLOD

Ticket Price:P70 (034) 441-0459

1 MUSIC and LYRICS
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 APOCALYPTO

ILOILO

Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC and LYRICS
4 APOCALYPTO
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
6 GHOST RIDER

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MTRCB Rating: R-13

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola IMAX THEATRE
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3:30PM 6:00PM 8:30PM
Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
T-REX IN 3D
11:45AM 1:00PM 2:15PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 PRIMEVAL
2 CATCH AND RELEASE
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 THE PROMISE/ EPIC MOVIE
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
GHOST RIDER
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
CINEMA 2
FLUSHED AWAY
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 THE PROMISE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 GHOST RIDER
8 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
9 EPIC MOVIE
10 NUMBER 23
11 YOU GOT ME
12 YOU GOT ME

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE PROMISE
6 FLUSHED AWAY
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 THE MESSENGERS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
11 NUMBER 23
12 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 YOU GOT ME
9 THE PROMISE
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PRIMEVAL
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 THE PROMISE
9 NUMBER 23
10 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 NUMBER 23
8 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
9 THE PROMISE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 GHOST RIDER
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 THE PROMISE

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 NUMBER 23
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER

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MTRCB Rating: PG-13 .

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 THE PROMISE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 YOU GOT ME
7 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
8 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 PRIMEVAL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 THE PROMISE
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 BABEL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE HOLIDAY

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE FOUNTAIN
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 BABEL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE CLEANER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 BABEL
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 YOU GOT ME
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3100
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PRIMEVAL
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 YOU GOT ME
8 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 RESERVED
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 RESERVED
8 THE MESSENGERS

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 PRIMEVAL
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 YOU GOT ME
5 THE CLEANER
6 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 GHOST RIDE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 PRIMEVAL

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movietime PROMO

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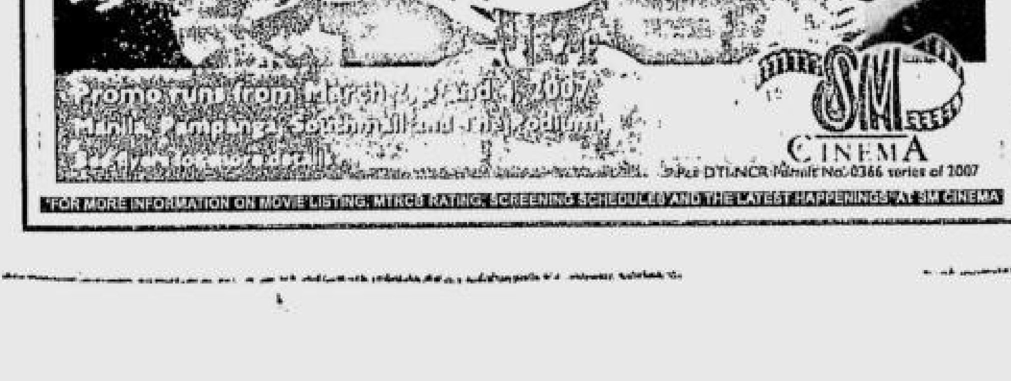
Promo runs from March 2, ... 2007
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0366 series of 2007

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Kris & Ja

nerabilities and, of course, the sheer guts to do anything and risk everything for fame.

Because of reality TV, audiences have found it more and more difficult to distinguish fact from fiction.

A celebrity's agenda has ceased to be just about award-winning moments in a chosen field of artistry. It has come to include giving the public access to his or her private life. Nowadays, a great part of the celebrity's charm is the ability to exhibit a persona that is sure to leave a distinct imprint on the minds of fans and detractors alike. A celebrity can afford to be ordinary in talent, but not in personality.

Media voyeurism

Scandals guarantee media mileage, prolong audience curiosity, and even break—or make—careers. It is not surprising for personalities who have done absolutely nothing worthy of commendation in their craft to become "newsworthy." The less-than-saintly are definitely more interesting to talk about in coffee shops, beauty parlors, parties, and in chat rooms on the Internet. Who got pregnant by whom, who is canoodling with what, who is gay or macho, who beat the living daylights out of whatever... keep the public guessing, moralizing, alive.

Whether concocted by the inherently and professionally malicious, or engineered to suit the needs of competing media institutions, such plots whet the appetite of the scandal-addicted population. What has emerged from this is a culture of media voyeurism that encourages shallow judgmental thinking: It is extremely easy to empathize with perceived victims and condemn perceived evil.

It is not even an exercise in moral discretion, but a virtual exhibition of amorality because celebrities cease to be treated as humans but rather as commodities meant to be snapped up, dissected and eventually discarded. Fans rally behind their idols because it gives them a sense of purpose and moral affirmation. Others twitter, laugh and pooh-pooh what they dub as cheapness and vulgarity, although they wouldn't pass up on the chance to hear every sordid detail.

Telenovela stuff

The most recent episode in Kris Aquino's life is authentic *telenovela* material. Seven months pregnant, the wife learns of the alleged infidelity of her once romantic hero husband—he who was meant to be a turning point in her life.

There is nothing new here; stories such as these abound, from the well-protected enclaves of the rich down to the claustrophobic side streets populated by the poorest of the poor.

What's gripping the whole country's interest is the ultra-popular cast of characters. After all, two of the three main protagonists have chosen to live their lives under the magnifying glass of public scrutiny.

Heartbreak trivialized

Whether or not there is a moral lesson to be learned from the situation, or whether it affirms the law of karma, is beside the point. Public interest tends to trivialize even genuine heartbreak and shatter the integrity of even the innocent.

As both print and broadcast media try to help reconstruct what transpired inside one cubicle in a dermatological clinic; as televiewers watch a weepy lady apologize and invoke the name of love to justify her actions; as they squirm while the sweaty husband is berated by his wife for the mischief ... every image and sound byte is lapped up, as in the latest hit soap.

It is on these occasions that the high and mighty are beloved for their fall. These occasions make the common man feel that the rich, powerful and famous are not exempt from the mishaps and embarrassments that make the ordinary and anonymous seem utterly useless.

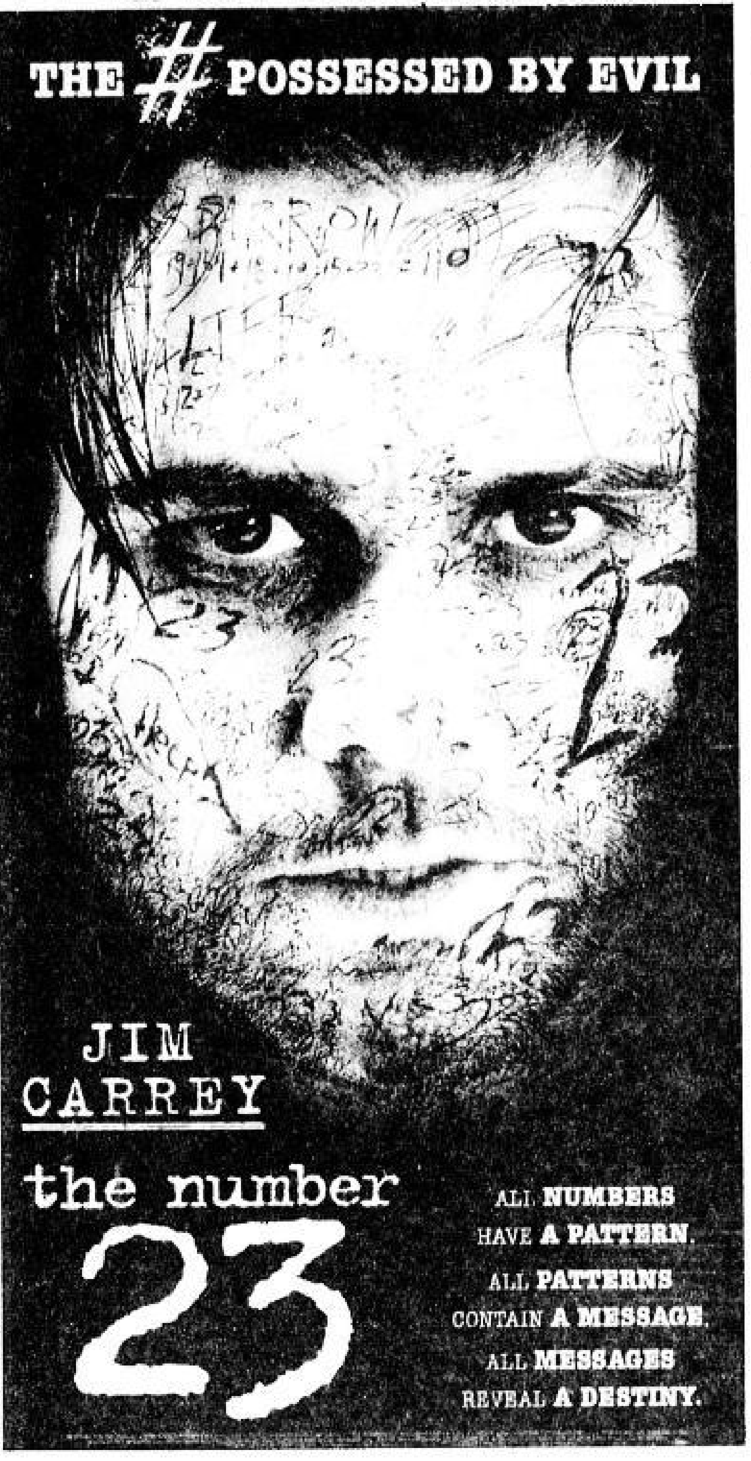
And this is where the true amorality lies: There are no more heroes and antagonists, only a love-hate relationship between the revered and the admirers. A celebrity willingly permits audiences to pilfer parts of every nook and cranny of their personal lives. It is part of a package deal. Reason and feeling are sacrificed for a stab at the truth/entertainment.

As much as media celebrities

mes show

From page H1

are praised, the public finds equal pleasure in watching them suffer. As much as celebrities open their lives to the cameras, they lose the right to draw the curtains and demand privacy in their loneliness. For even that has become part of one big show.



MTRCB RATING R-13 | STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
NOW SHOWING
THE # POSSESSED BY EVIL
JIM CARREY
the number 23
ALL NUMBERS HAVE A PATTERN.
ALL PATTERNS CONTAIN A MESSAGE.
ALL MESSAGES REVEAL A DESTINY.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 FLUSHED AWAY
MTRCB GP
1:05, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00

2 YOU GOT ME
MTRCB GP
12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
MTRCB PG-13
12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

4 PRIMEVAL
MTRCB R 13
12 40 3 00 5 20 7:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
MUSIC AND LYRICS
MTRCB PG 13
12.40, 3 00, 5 20, 7 40, 10 00

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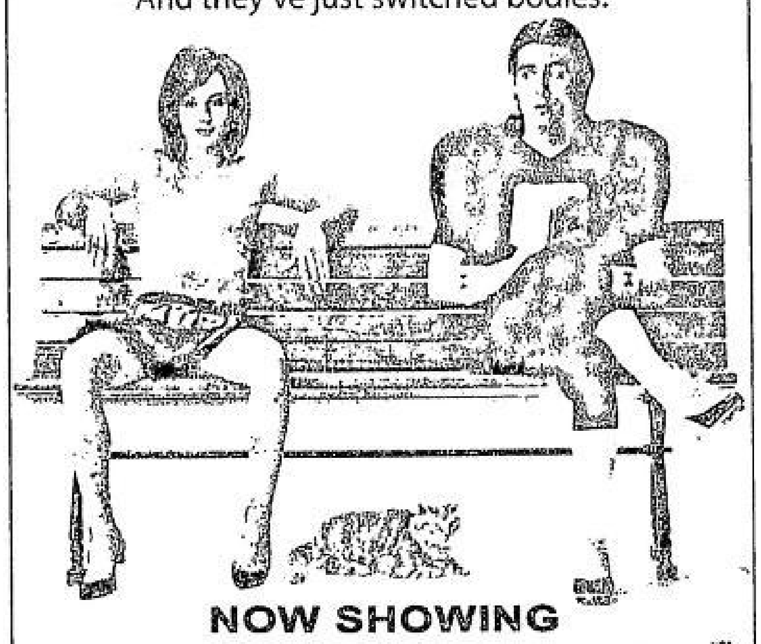
Shangri-La Plaza

MTRCB PG-13 | [illegible]
kevin zegers samaire armstrong sharon osbourne
it's a boygirl thing
He's the hottest jock.
She's the biggest nerd.
They're sworn enemies.
And they've just switched bodies.



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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

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GREENHILLS
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CINEMA 1 YOU GOT ME
11:00 , 1:20 , 3:40
6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35
GP

CINEMA 2 GHOST RIDER
11:45 , 2:25 , 5:00
7:35 , 10:10
PG-13

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PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 ITS A BOY GIRL THING
11:00 , 1:20 , 3:40
6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35
PG-13

CINEMA 4 FLUSHED AWAY
11:15 , 1:25 , 3:35
5:45 , 7:55 , 10:10
GP

CINEMA 5 THE PRIMEVAL
10:45 , 1:00 , 3:15
5:30 , 7:45 , 10:00
R-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

March 06 , 2007	EDNA LEDESMA "DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS"	8:00 PM
March 16 & 23 , 2007	SITTI ... IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30 , 2007	[illegible]	8:00 PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
March 9 , 2007	DAVE	8:30 PM
March 10 , 2007	JOHN LESACA	8:00 PM
March 15 , 22 , 29 , 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

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Will Smith & son in a heartwarming true story
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"★★★★! ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR. WILL SMITH GIVES THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER."
Steve Oldfield FOX-TV
"TWO THUMBS UP"
Richard Roeper and Aisha Tyler, Guest Critic, EBERT & ROEPER
"A FEEL-GOOD MOVIE...,RAISE A GLASS TO SALUTE WILL SMITH... HE EMERGES A WINNER."
Leah Rozen PEOPLE
"A TOUCHING MOVIE, WITH A BEAUTIFUL AND UNDERSTATED PERFORMANCE FROM WILL SMITH."
Owen Gleiberman, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY
"★★★★! POWERFUL AND UPLIFTING!"
Shawn Edwards, FOX-TV
WINNER Will Smith Best Actor
WINNER Jaden Christopher Syre Smith Best Young Actor

WILL SMITH
the PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
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Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777
THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 NUMBER 23	2 PRIMEVAL	3 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA	4 YOU GOT ME
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 FLUSHED AWAY	2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	3 THX PRIMEVAL GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA	5 THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND	6 YOU GOT ME	7 EPIC MOVIE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 PRIMEVAL	2 YOU GOT ME		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MUSIC & LYRICS GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	4 FLUSHED AWAY GUARANTEED SEATS	5 YOU GOT ME GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX YOU GOT ME GUARANTEED SEATS	2 PRIMEVAL		
	3 FLUSHED AWAY	4 MUSIC & LYRICS	5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 YOU GOT ME	2 PRIMEVAL	3 FLUSHED AWAY	4 THE FOUNTAIN
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 YOU GOT ME	2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING		
	3 GHOST RIDER	4 PRIMEVAL	5 FLUSHED AWAY	

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Express Credit Installment Madness February 28 to March 18, 2007	Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 2 to 4, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
USC College of Architecture & Fine Arts Annual Design Awards March 5, 2007	Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 9 to 11, 2007

GREENBELT 5 Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents L Collection of Lulu Tan Gan
February 22 to March 4, 2007

Onstage Repertory Philippines presents SONG & DANCE
at REP's Globe Theater - February 9 to March 4, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows)
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For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

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GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS
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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS' COMES THE STORY OF THE BATTLE FOR IWO JIMA TOLD THROUGH THE EYES OF THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS
THE BEST FILM OF THE YEAR
LOS ANGELES FILM CRITICS
NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW
TIME MAGAZINE
LOS ANGELES TIMES
THE NEW YORK TIMES
"WHAT EASTWOOD HAS DONE IS EXTRAORDINARY..."
硫黄島からの手紙
4 OSCAR NOMINATIONS INCLUDING BEST PICTURE
WINNER GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD BEST PICTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE
"UNPRECEDENTED"
LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA
A CLINT EASTWOOD FILM
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13
glorietta GREENBELT

Kids Play at Bonifacio High Street
(in front of Krispy Kreme)
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Mar 3 & 4, Mar 10 & 11
4pm - 7pm

Activities:
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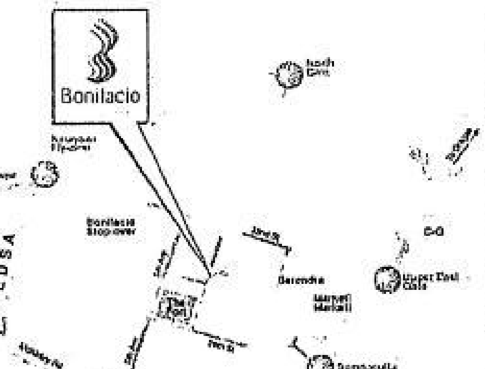
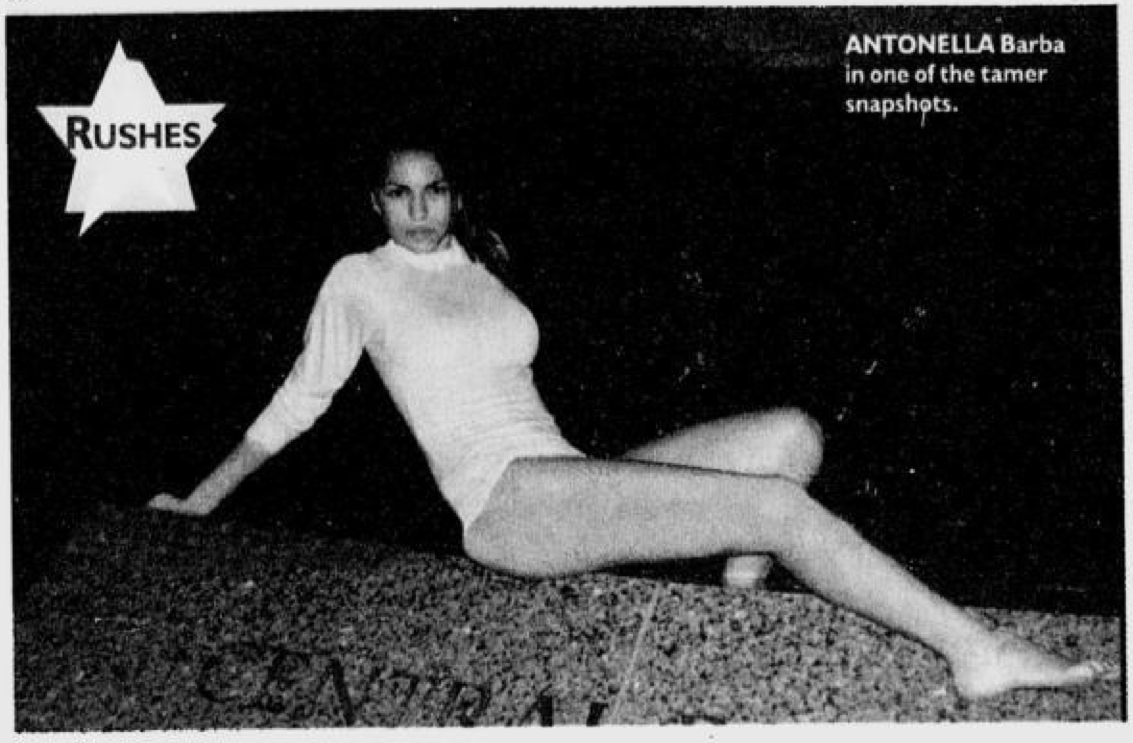
- Caricatures
- Glimmer Tattoos
- Balloon Sculpting
- Sand Art Station
- Magnet Painting Station



Bonifacio Bonifacio High Street forward taguig

Racy pics on Internet: Looks like 'Idol's' Antonella Barba

RUSHES


ANTONELLA Barba in one of the tamer snapshots.

LOS ANGELES—THE INTERNET was abuzz over a series of racy photos linked to an "American Idol" contestant.

The pictures, posted on several Web sites, included one with four women posing topless at the beach, their hands covering their breasts, and others with a woman engaged in a sex act.

The anonymous postings alleged that Antonella Barba, 20, of Point Pleasant, New Jersey, was depicted in the photos and did not indicate how they were obtained.

Alex Gillespie, a Fox publicist in New York for the top-rated show, said Friday the network would have no comment on the incident or whether it might affect Barba's participation in the contest.

Gillespie said the network is not making any of the contestants available to speak to the media.

A message left Friday on an answering machine at the Point Pleasant home of Barba's parents, Vincenzo and Valerie Barba, was not immediately returned.

This week, Barba survived the first round of viewer voting and was scheduled to compete again next week.

Nigel Lythgoe, an "American Idol" producer, was quoted on Entertainment Weekly's Web site on Friday as saying he was unaware of the photographs.

"We have really good background checks on everybody, and we deal with that every season," he told EW.com. "It's sad, isn't it, that your best friends are the ones that come forward with information that will go to Smoking Gun or put your photographs on the Web?" *AP*

Naked, naked Daniel

LONDON—Teenage film star Daniel Radcliffe threw off Harry Potter's invisibility cloak on Tuesday to appear naked on a London stage in the psychological thriller "Equus."

Radcliffe, who found fame as the young wizard in the Potter films, plays a troubled stable boy who 'ritualistically blinds horses in a production that has caused a flurry of excitement among his hordes of teenage fans. He confessed afterwards to first night nerves but, he told Reuters Television, "After the first couple of previews, I didn't really care anymore."

Asked about all the publicity over his nude scenes, he said "It all seemed to imply the nudity was gratuitous which it isn't at all."

He won a standing ovation on opening night at London's Gielgud Theatre. You could hear a pin drop in the auditorium when the 17-year-old performed his naked scene with actress Joanna Christie, who plays his girlfriend.

Not since Nicole Kidman bared all in "The Blue Room" in 1998 and was hailed as "pure theatrical Viagra" has so much hype greeted stage nudity in London with publicity photos of Radcliffe helping to ensure two million pounds in advance sales.

One famous face was missing on opening night—JK Rowling, author of the Potter books.

But Radcliffe said "She is is coming to see it at some point." *Reuters*

'The J&J Project'

HONG KONG—The kung fu movie fan's ultimate fantasy is set to become reality.

Jackie Chan and Jet Li said in their blogs Wednesday that they're ready to team up in a Hollywood film for the first time, a move that would bring together two of the biggest names in action cinema.

Chan said on his Web site that his next movie will be "The J&J Project," as the planned film is currently known.

On his blog, Li confirmed the partnership.

"Coming up next, if there are no big changes, I will make 'The J&J Project,'" he said.

The plot for the movie remains unclear. *AP*

Red carpet for Liz, 75

HENDERSON—A red carpet fit for a queen was laid out Tuesday for Hollywood icon Elizabeth Taylor, who was to celebrate her 75th birthday at a party at a Lake Las Vegas Resort.

Guests including Debbie Reynolds, her daughter Carrie Fisher and magicians Siegfried Fischbacher and Roy Horn turned out for the closed party at the Medici Cafe and Terrace at the Ritz-Carlton, Lake Las Vegas.

Reynolds said she's known Taylor since they were both 17 and under contract to MGM. Both women were married at separate times to Eddie Fisher.

"We've had a very unusual friendship, and it's lasted all these years," Reynolds said.

Horn called the evening "a great night for a great lady." AP

Incredible welcome

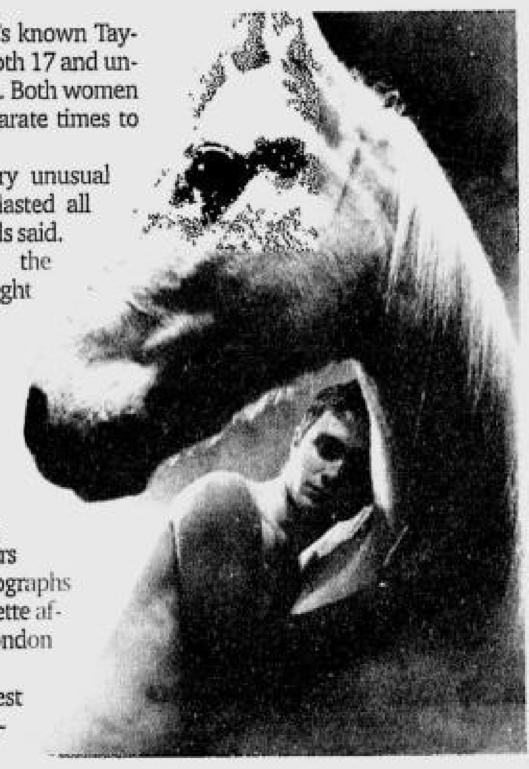
LONDON—Dame Helen Mirren received a standing ovation from fellow travellers and posed for photographs with her Oscar statuette after returning to London Tuesday.

Mirren, named Best Actress at the Academy Awards earlier this week for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in "The Queen," spent about 20 minutes signing autographs in the baggage hall at London's Heathrow airport.

"I've just had the most incredible welcome to my country. It's very, very sweet," she said, after flying in from Los Angeles, where she has her main home.

The 61-year-old actress, whose achievement was hailed by Prime Minister Tony Blair, could now be invited to tea at Buckingham Palace to meet the real queen.

Royal officials said the monarch was "pleased" by Mirren's success. *AFP*


DANIEL Radcliffe in "Equus." REUTERS

PAROKYA ni Edgar

Bossa nova takes on rock

SHOW TIME

SITTI PERFORMS IN "BOSSA Rocks" with DJ-rapper Mo Twister, "Philippine Idol" finalist Jan Nieto, Color It Red's Cookie Chua, Imago Band's Aia and The Dawn's Jett Pangan.

Sitti lends her music a twist as bossa nova takes on rock.

The concert is set at the Music Museum on March 16 and 23.

Meanwhile, out in the market is Sitti's latest album titled "Sitti... Live" from Warner Music Philippines.

Jazz festival

Versatile jazz vocalist Annie Brazil joins Merk & Friends in "Wednesday Jazz Festival" throughout March at Merk's.

Annie Brazil started singing jazz in Manila and Japan in the '50s. She made her way through Asia's entertainment scene from Okinawa, Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore, Hong Kong and Bangkok and New York.

Annie received an Asian American Jazz Festival Award for her artistic achievement in New York City.

Merk's Bar Bistro is located at Level 3 Greenbelt 3. Call 757-4720 and 757-4721.

Crystal Voice

Marri Nallos, dubbed the "Original Crystal Voice of Asia," stars in a solo concert at The Atrium of Limketkai Mall in Cagayan de Oro City on tonight at 7:30.

Her guests are Nonoy Zuniga and Juan Rodrigo.

Call 088-22-724-162 or 088-856-4499.

Parokya parties

Parokya ni Edgar plays in Ratsky Morato on March 2 as part of the Winston circuit.

Winston, one of the pioneers in music marketing, has prepared new and bigger events for the year.

Upcoming events include performances by the Urbandub at the Music Warehouse, Dagupan City on March 9 and Cueshe at The Venue, Davao City.

This event is not open to those under 18 years of age.

March 2

Serenata 2007: UST Band Festival featuring **ISM Wind Ensemble, UP Symphonic Band, Pasig City Band** and **UST Wind Orchestra** at the **Rajah Sulayman Park** in Baywalk, Roxas Boulevard

RJ with the **Moonstrucksat** RJTV Bar

March 3

Area One at Merk's Bar & Bistro, Greenbelt 3

March 6

Dale Adriatico at RJTV Bar

March 7

RJ with the **Mellow Yellow** Band at RJTV Bar

A musical has-been with self-deprecating relish

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE WERE ATTRACTED TO THE NEW ROmantic comedy, "Music and Lyrics," by its first team-up of **Hugh Grant** and **Drew Barrymore**. Shortly after the movie started, however, we found ourselves focusing more on Grant, because his role was more challenging than his co-star's.

For the first time in his career, the debonair leading man is playing a has-been singer—and loving every minute of it. The role is a big stretch for him, not just because it requires him to sing and dance, but also because he has to age so he's believable as a former pop star from the campy '80s.

Grant pulls off the challenging shift with cool panache, acquitting himself well in his song and dance routines. His innovative characterization is so successful that it leaves Barrymore's own portrayal, adequate though it may be, far behind.

The film itself is not all that interesting, because it's pegged on a slim premiere, involving Grant's comeback bid if he is able to write a new song for a hot teen sensation.

Messy bundle

Alas, his old lyricist is no longer available, so he has to find a new writer to collaborate with. Wonder of wonders, he discovers that the woman who takes care of his plants is an unheralded whiz at writing lyrics, so he convinces her to work with him.

This takes a lot of doing, since Barrymore's character is a messy bundle of insecurities and unresolved romantic traumas. So, even after the new song is approved and the collaborators fall in love, they can't be truly happy because her neuroses get in the way.

This is the movie's weakest link, its story's detour into literary territory. So, we're glad when the bump in the road has been passed, and the movie focuses on the teen idol whose decision to work with them can revolutionize the new songwriting team's prospects.

Unexpectedly but happily, this segment turns out to be a very pleasant surprise, because the **Britney Spears**-like teen singing superstar is beautifully played by young newcomer **Haley Bennett**, who should be a big singing star in real life herself.

Twice upstaged

Bennett gets her character's shallowness and "spiritual" hypocrisy down perfectly, and she's also amazing to watch when she's performing.

So, poor Drew Barrymoore gets inadvertently upstaged twice in this production, first by Grant and then by Bennett. We tell you, it's enough to make a Barrymore weep.

But Grant and Bennett's outstanding portrayals are appreciated by viewers, because they end up saving this movie from its mediocre self.

A final plus factor is the film's exploration of the links between song composers and lyricists. Whose work is more important?

This is a musical "chicken and egg" question, and the film answers it by having Barrymore's character state: "A song's melody is the first to attract a listener, but its lyrics enable the listeners to get to know the song intimately enough to fall in love with it." Gotcha.

On 2nd Ave.

Monday at 9 p.m., "Men in Trees" is a fun and sexy ensemble drama about finding love in the most unexpected places. Anne Hache stars.

Wednesdays at 9 p.m., "Hell's Kitchen" is a reality challenge fielding 12 wannabe restaurateurs training under world-renowned chef **Gordon Ramsay**, who turns out to be a despot of the first order who really puts his wards through the wringer.

Thursdays at 8 p.m., "Real Housewives of Orange County" is a reality show that exposes the excitement, extravagance and everyday drama in a protested Southern California enclave.

And Fridays at 8 p.m., "Saved" is a medical drama that stars Tom Everett Scott as a paramedic who finds the breakneck pace of his 24-hour shift a welcome escape from his inner demons.

'Letters from Iwo Jima'

After "Flags of Our Fathers," **Clint Eastwood** takes a reverse look at World War II and views it from the Japanese soldiers' side. Eastwood came across a book of letters by Iwo Jima's defending general, Kobayashi, to his wife and children.

The director then proceeded to cast his film with Japanese actors, to give it the authenticity of voice that has made it unique, and a much praised and honored film all over the world.

RP film pitted against Oscar winner

From page H1

"Half Nelson" was in the running for Best Picture, told him, "I voted for you!"

As the countdown to the show began, Auraeus admitted to us, "I have no expectations. This is a fitting ending to a wonderful year."

Vagina monologue

Returning host **Sarah Silverman** set the irreverent tone by mentioning "vagina" so many times in her usual opening monologue. She simulated having sex with cheese, and a video clip of her as "Talking Vagina" was shown. Registering varying degrees of amusement in the audience were **Heath Ledger** and **Michelle Williams, Sean Penn, Robin Wright Penn, Rosario Dawson, Faye Dunaway, Tobey Maguire, Christina Ricci** (director **John Waters** came onstage with a long chain tied to him, in a spoof of Christina's role in "Black Snake Moan"), **Matt Dillon, John C. Reilly, America "Ugly Betty" Ferrera, Anjelica Huston, Felicity Huffman, Maggie Gyllenhaal** and **Lucy Liu**.

Always the best part of this show are the tributes to Best Picture nominees via song parodies. **Loretta Levine**, a Dreamgirl from the original Broadway production, honored "The Dead Girl" with the theme song from "Beauty and the Beast" (it became "Beauty is Deceased"). **Minnie Driver**, impressed us with her song tribute to "Pan's Labyrinth." **Taylor Dane**'s musical ode to "Little Miss Sunshine" was "Screw the Family" (to the tune of "We Are Family").

In between these numbers, the winners were announced in the different categories. The "Little Miss Sunshine" contingent collected trophies for Best Picture; Best Directors (**Jonathan Dayton** and **Valerie Faris**), Best Supporting Actor (**Alan Arkin**) and Best First Screenplay (**Michael Arndt**). "Thank You For Smoking" got one for Best Screenplay (**Jason Reitman**). "Half Nelson's" leads topped the acting races: Best Actor (**Ryan Gosling**–remember him in the tearjerker "The Notebook"?) and Best Actress (**Shareeka Epps**, uncannily poised and elegant onscreen and in person). "Quinceañera" won the John Cassavetes Award while "Friends With Money" won a Best Supporting Actress award for **Frances McDormand**, who was absent.

Sunset glow

After the show, as we looked for Auraeus and Peter, we met **Richard "Rich" Wong** and Fil-Am actress **L.A. Renigen**. Richard was nominated for the IFC/Acura Someone to Award for "Colma: The Musical," which stars L.A. and was written and scored by Fil-Am **H.P. Mendoza**. We can't wait to see their movie, which will be shown in key US cities this summer because we have been hearing and reading a lot of good buzz about it.

All the stars had filed out and started to drive away or walk to the nearby Shutters on the Beach Hotel for the after-party and still there was no sign of Auraeus. After a quick call to the Palawano, we learned that he and Peter went home to the latter's Venice beach home to change clothes.

Finally, as a beautiful sunset glowed on the Pacific Ocean, Auraeus and Peter arrived at the party. The filmmaker changed into a black shirt with glitter, also by **John Abul**.

Auraeus told us some details of his next movie, a sort of reminiscing about his Philippine Science High School student days. Someday, we hope to see a Filipino version of Mexico's Tres Amigos who are currently ruling the cinema world—Alejandro González Iñárritu, Guillermo del Toro and Alfonso Cuarón.

"*Amigos* and *amigas*" sounds fine, too. It doesn't even have to be *tres* or *cuatro*—the more, the merrier! To the Solitos, Jeturians, Laranases, Yamamotos and other film talents of Philippine cinema, let's make it happen!

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585 @yahoo.com.

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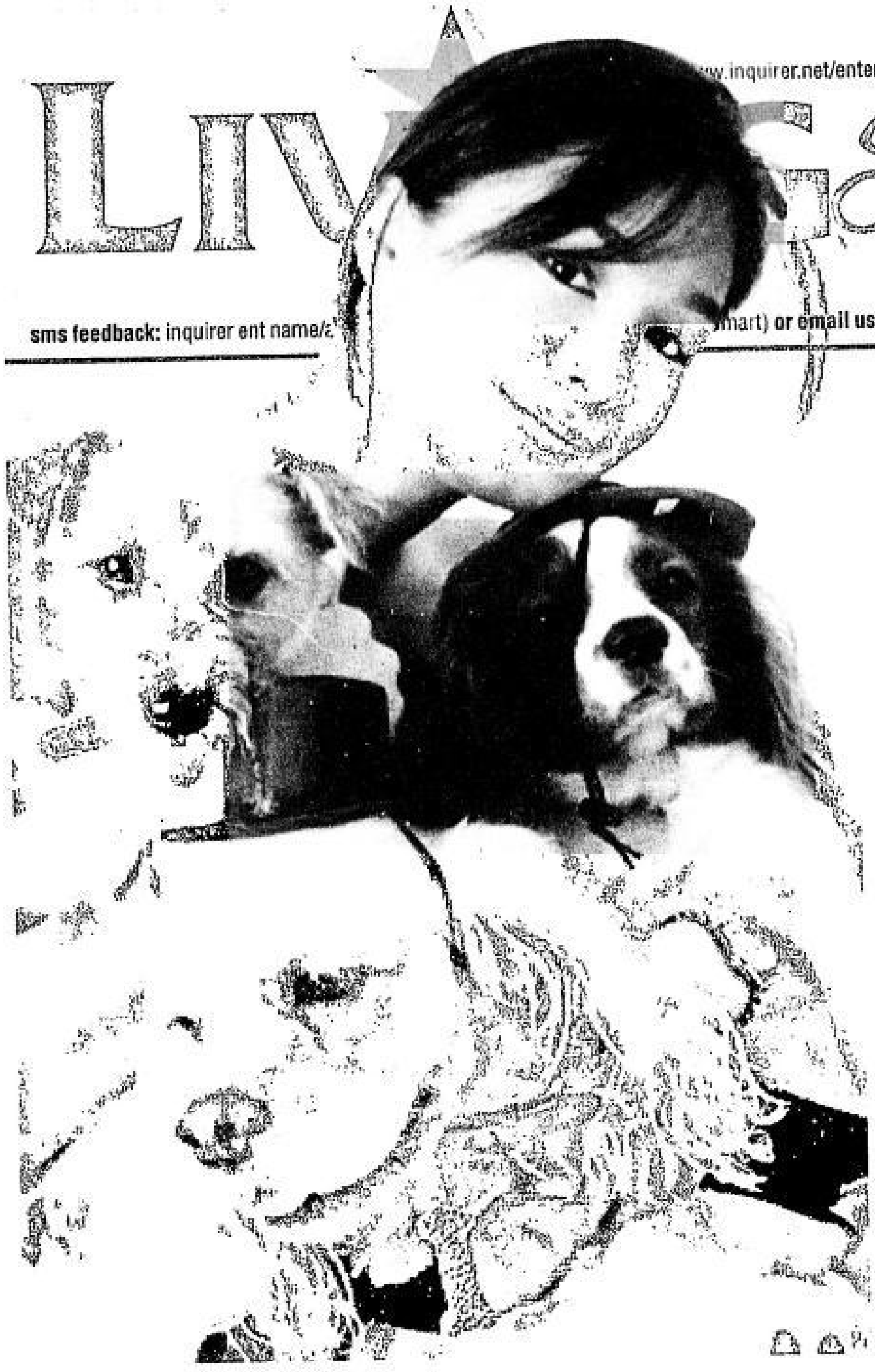

TAIL TALES

HEART EVANGELISTA

EVEN THOUGH I HAVE ASTHMA, I take care of three dogs: Al, a two-year-old English Cocker Spaniel; Kisso, a one-year-old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel; and Davis, a two-year-old Jack Russell. I got them a *yaya* because I'm always out of the house. I bring them to the vet for their checkups, and to the groomer for regular trims—especially if it's asthma season. I'm allowed to have pets, as long as I take my medicines. Not cats, though, because of their fine hair. I love animals; they give me pure joy. I'd like to be a veterinarian someday. I plan to touch base with (the animal welfare group) PAWS soon.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

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BOOKS

PIOLO PASCUAL

MY DAILY READING fare consists of the Bible and other Christian books, like "Heaven is so Real," by Choo Thomas, "My Utmost for His Highest" by Oswald Chambers, "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing His Will" by Henry T. Blackaby and "The Heavenly Man: The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun" by Brother Yun and Paul Hattaway. "Heaven is so Real" was lent to me by [good friend] Rica Peralejo. These books teach me a lot. These books recount first-hand experiences of people who fought for their faith. I am very choosy when it comes to books. I prefer those that inspire, encourage and enlighten me. I seldom get the chance to read. But I never miss out on spiritual books. I also read the Bible every night before I sleep.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

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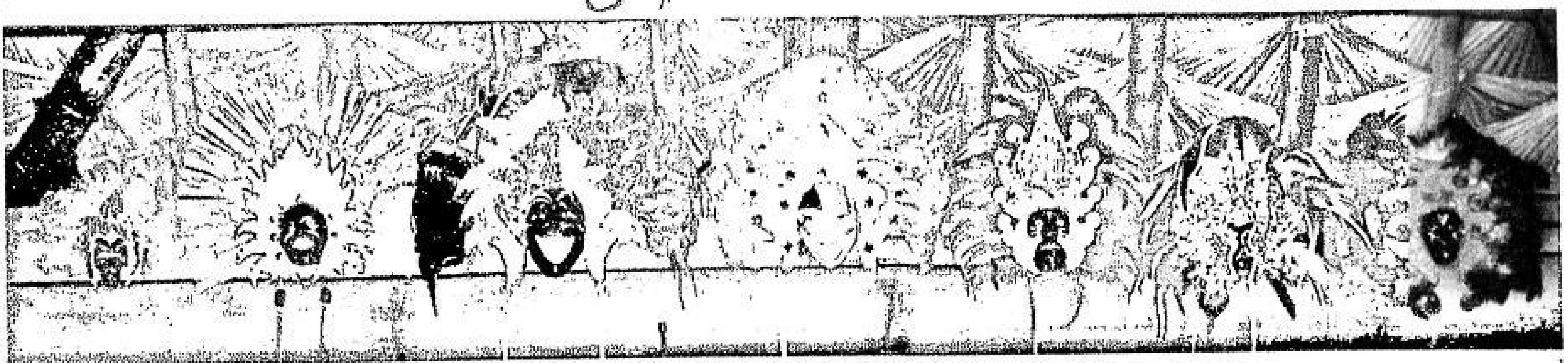
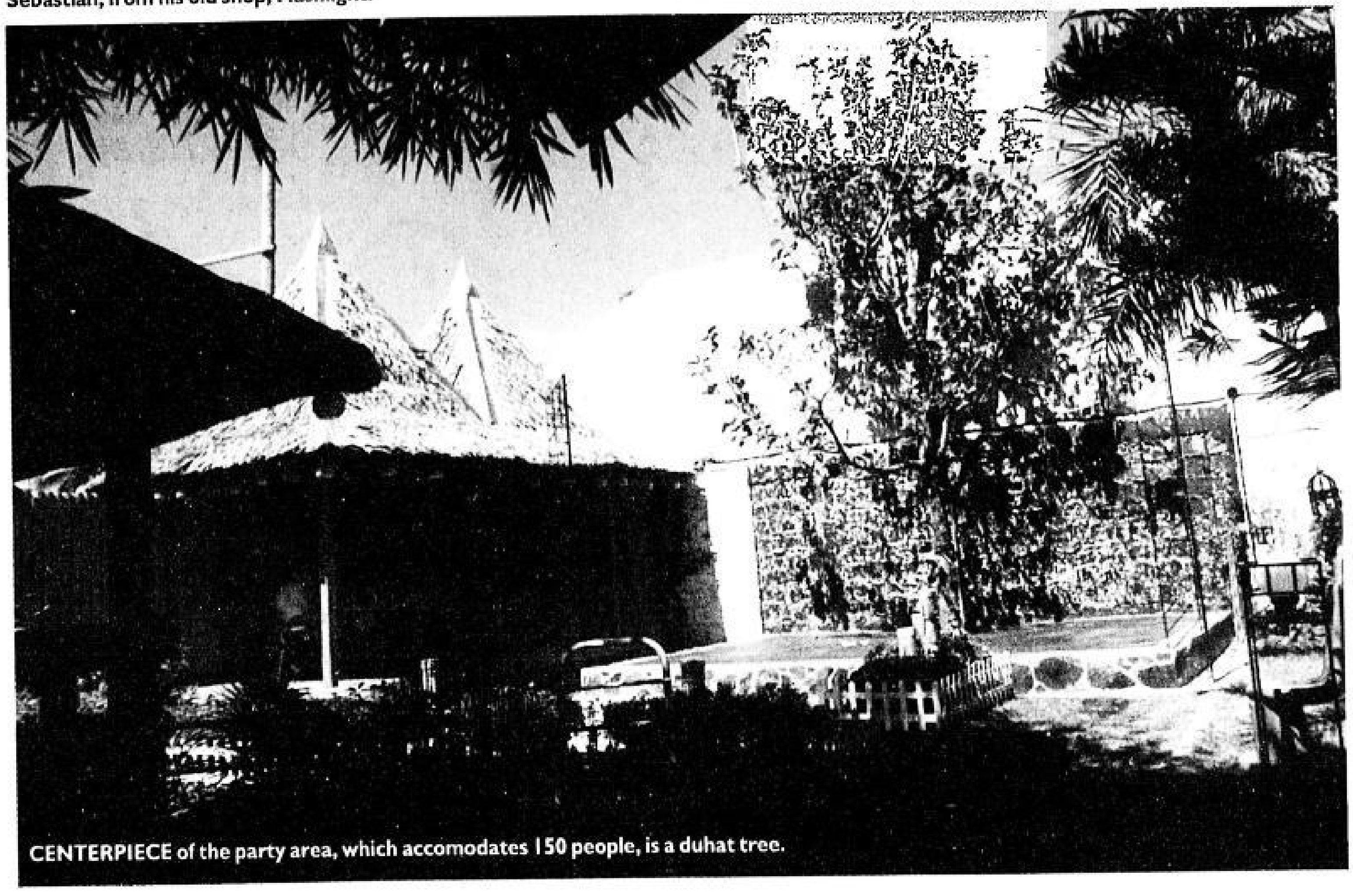
"ANGEL" painting is by Marilou Diaz-Abaya; the antique chair, lamp and statue of Saint Sebastian, from his old shop, Flashlight.



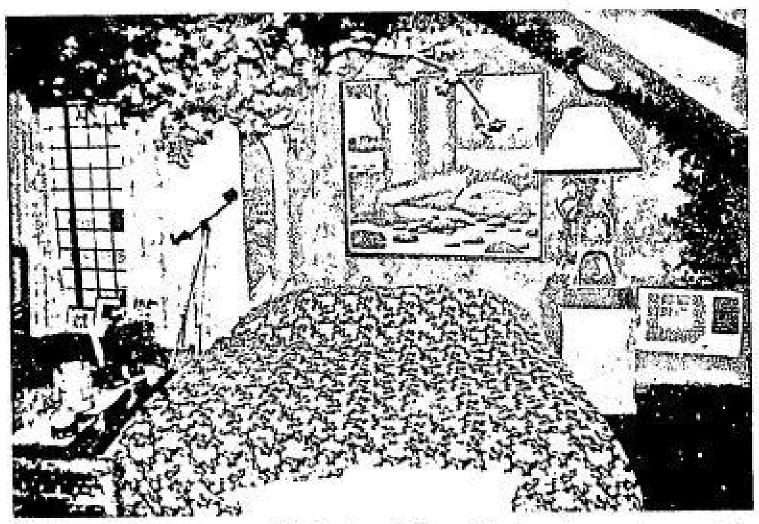
MINIATURE mask collection from Bacolod's Masskara Festival.

'Paraiso ni Maryo'

Award-winning filmmaker has built a place of rest and relaxation in Laguna which, he just recently realized, should be shared with friends



CENTERPIECE of the party area, which accomodates 150 people, is a duhat tree.



THE master bedroom, with its faux foliage. He has always dreams of sleeping under a tree, the filmmaker explains.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

Photos by Rudy Esperas

HOME BODY

FILMMAKER MARYO J. DE LOS Reyes calls his little piece of paradise in Pansol, Laguna "a labor of love." He literally built it from the ground up.

Construction took five long years, he recounts. "We built in stages. When I didn't have work, construction had to stop."

Most of the furnishings and art pieces are from his old antique shop/art gallery called Flashlight in Quezon City.

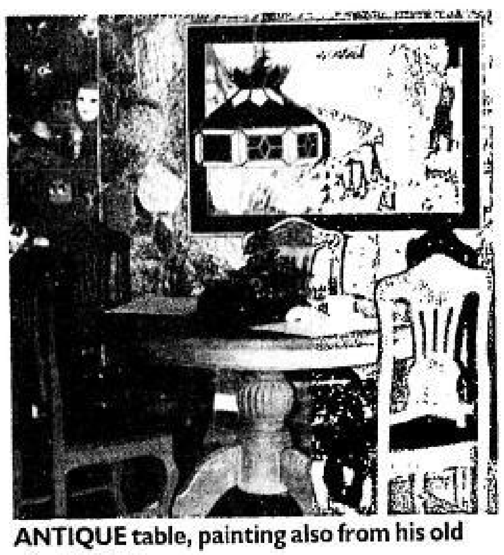
He has displayed paintings by friends, like filmmaker Marilou Diaz-Abaya, critic Gigi Alfonso and actors Aga Muhlach, Romnick Sarmenta and Anna Marie Gutierrez.

In the master bedroom is a faux tree with autumn leaves.

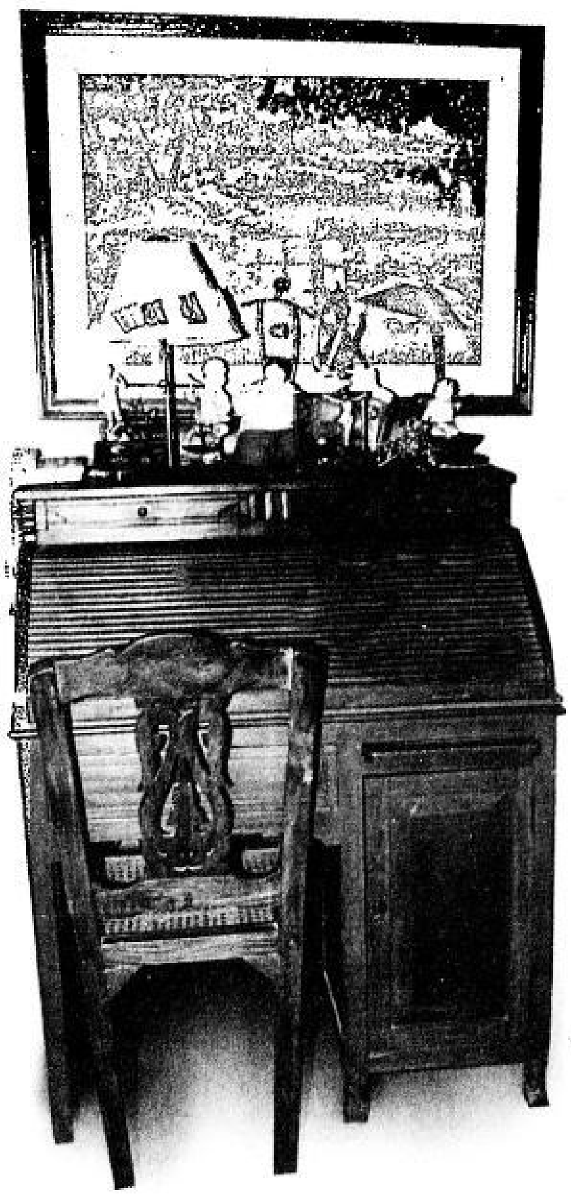
"I've always wanted to sleep under a tree," he explains.

In the room are some of his favorite things, including an antique *aparador* formerly owned by revolutionary president Emilio Aguinaldo and a pair of *halo-halo* ice-crushers-turned-lamps.

PARAISO/ 15

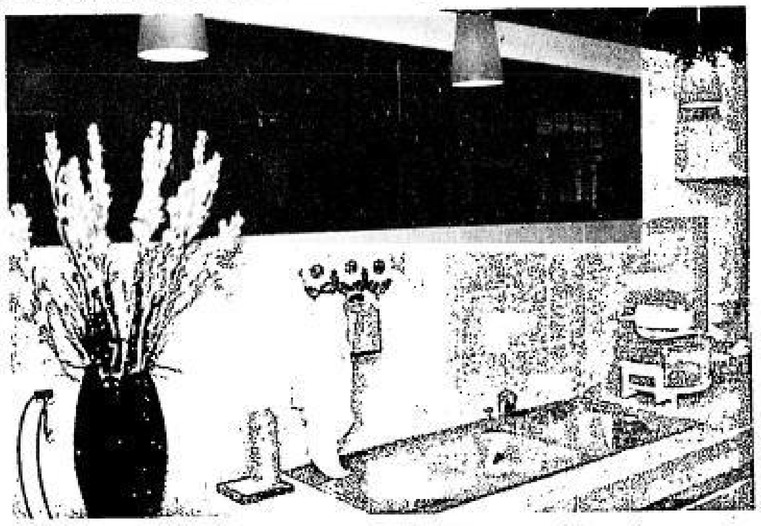


ANTIQUE table, painting also from his old shop/gallery.



ANGELS and Japanese dolls rest on the *escritoire*.

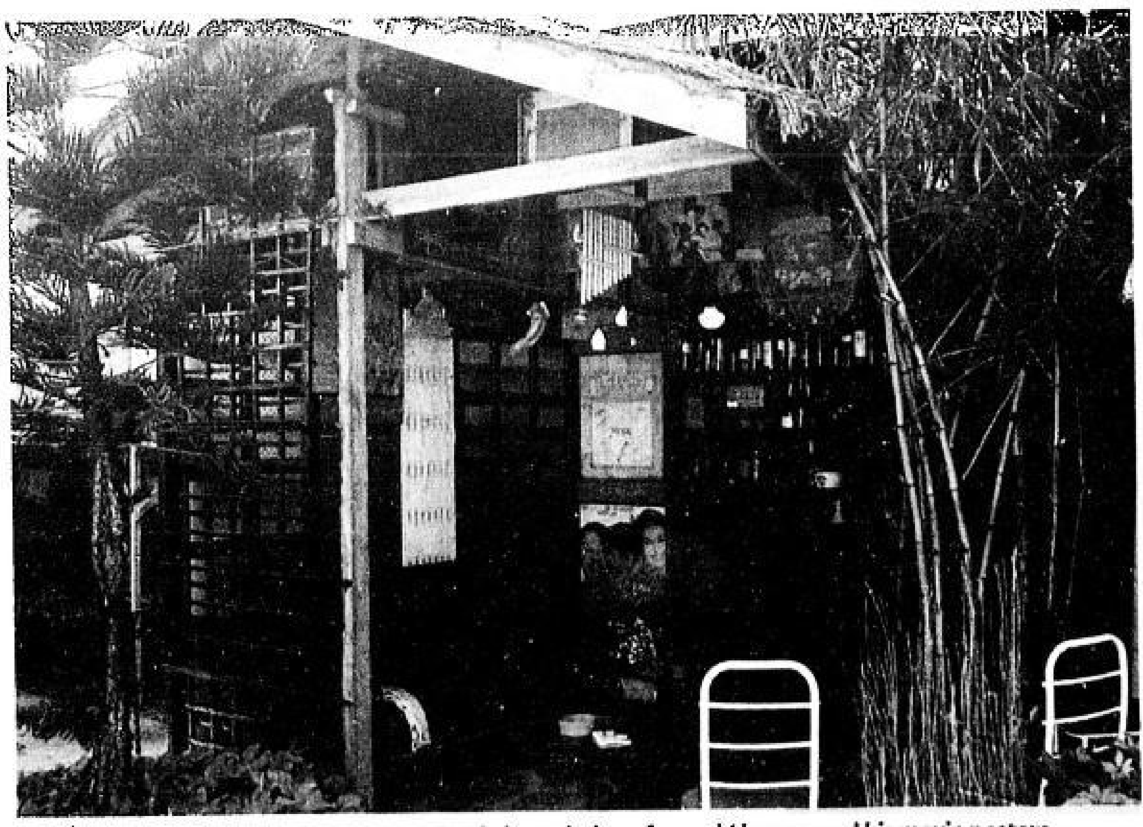
MASK collection from Korea, Africa, Thailand, Japan and Mexico.



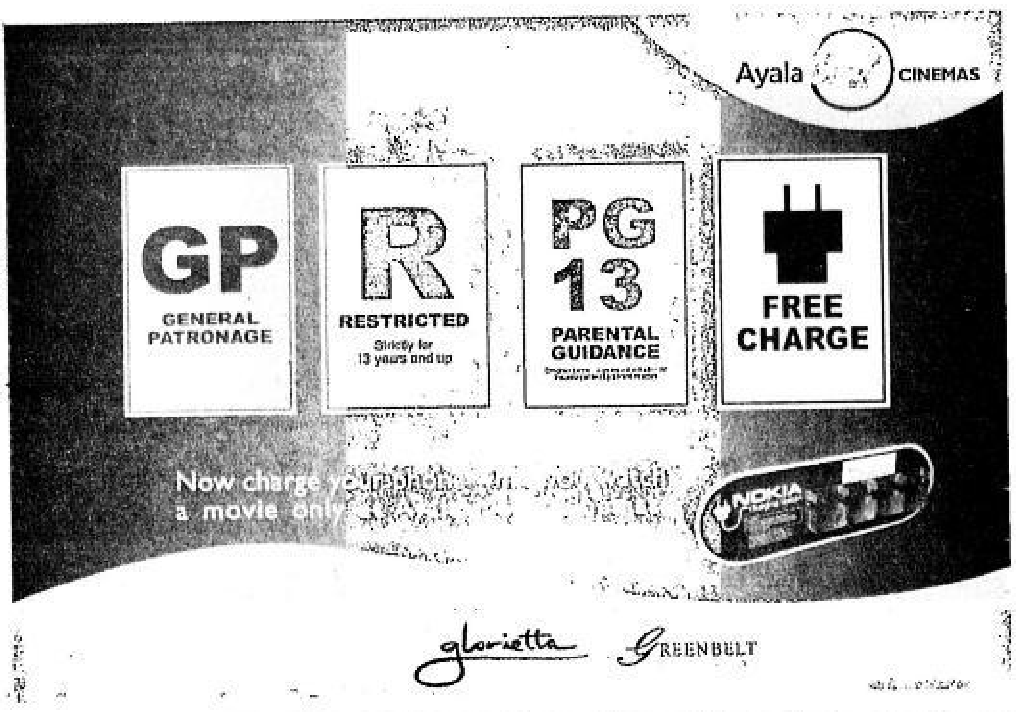
FLOWERS in the kitchen. They are called Azucena, Maryo J says.

BAY WINDOWS and antique pieces give the living room a rustic feel.

THE TERRACE is Maryo J's favorite nook. "I sometimes sleep here, under the moon and stars."



CAFÉ-LOUNGE features a mini-bar, stained glass windows from old houses and his movie posters.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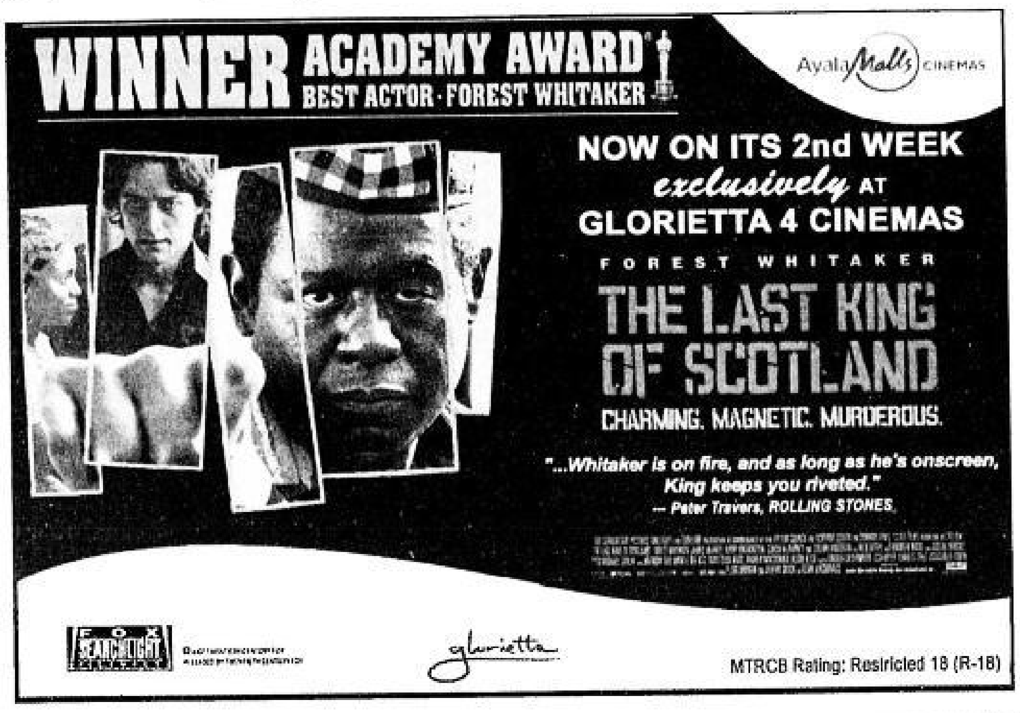
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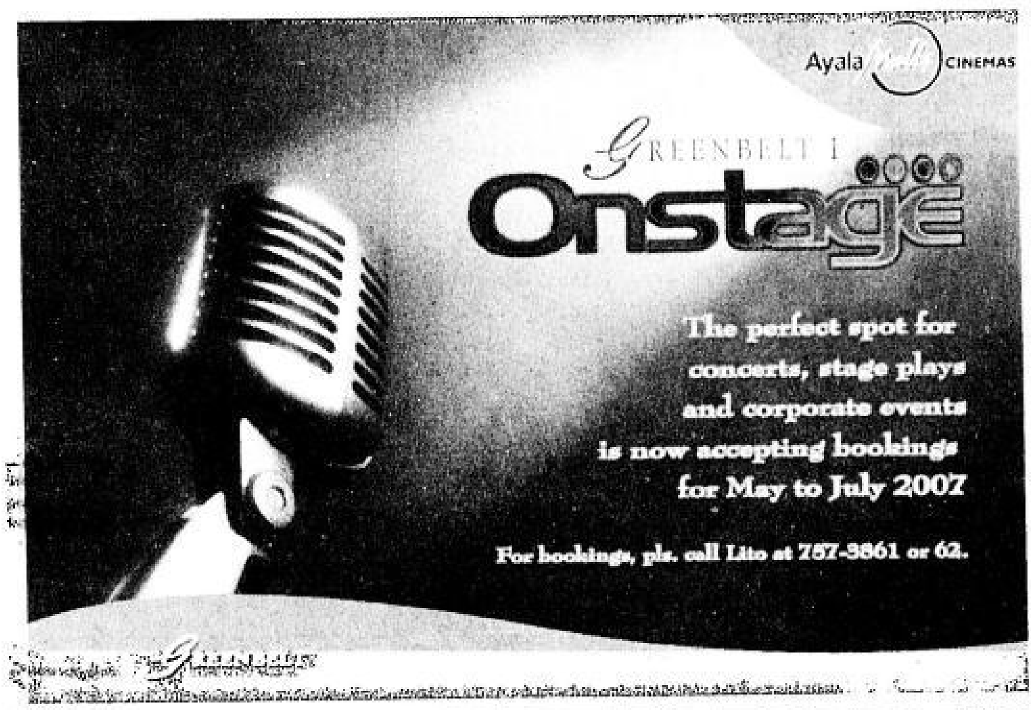
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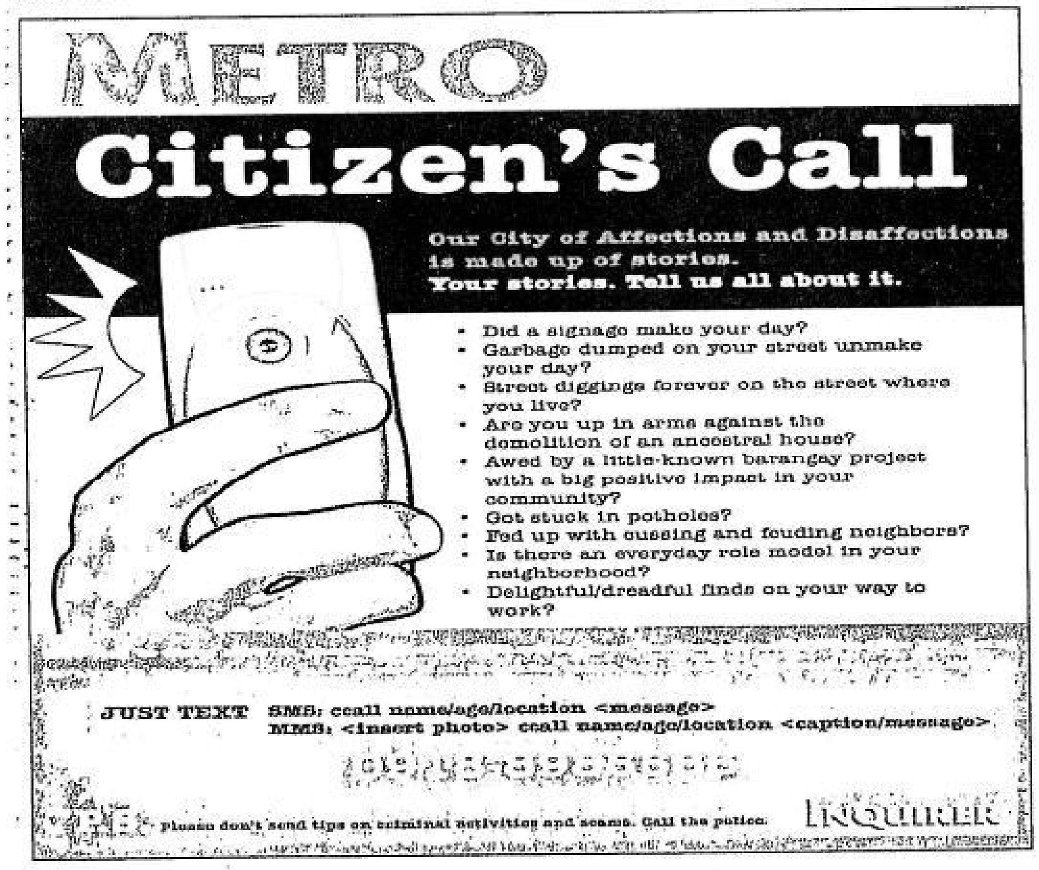
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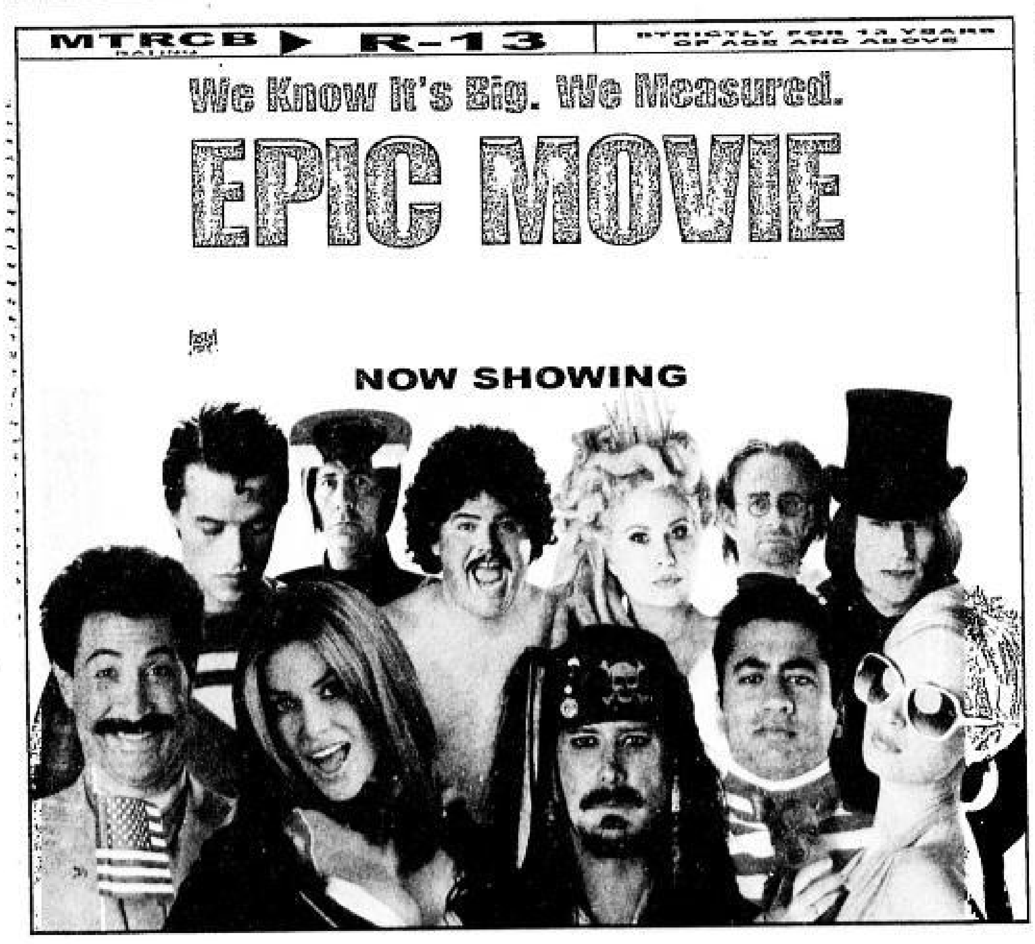
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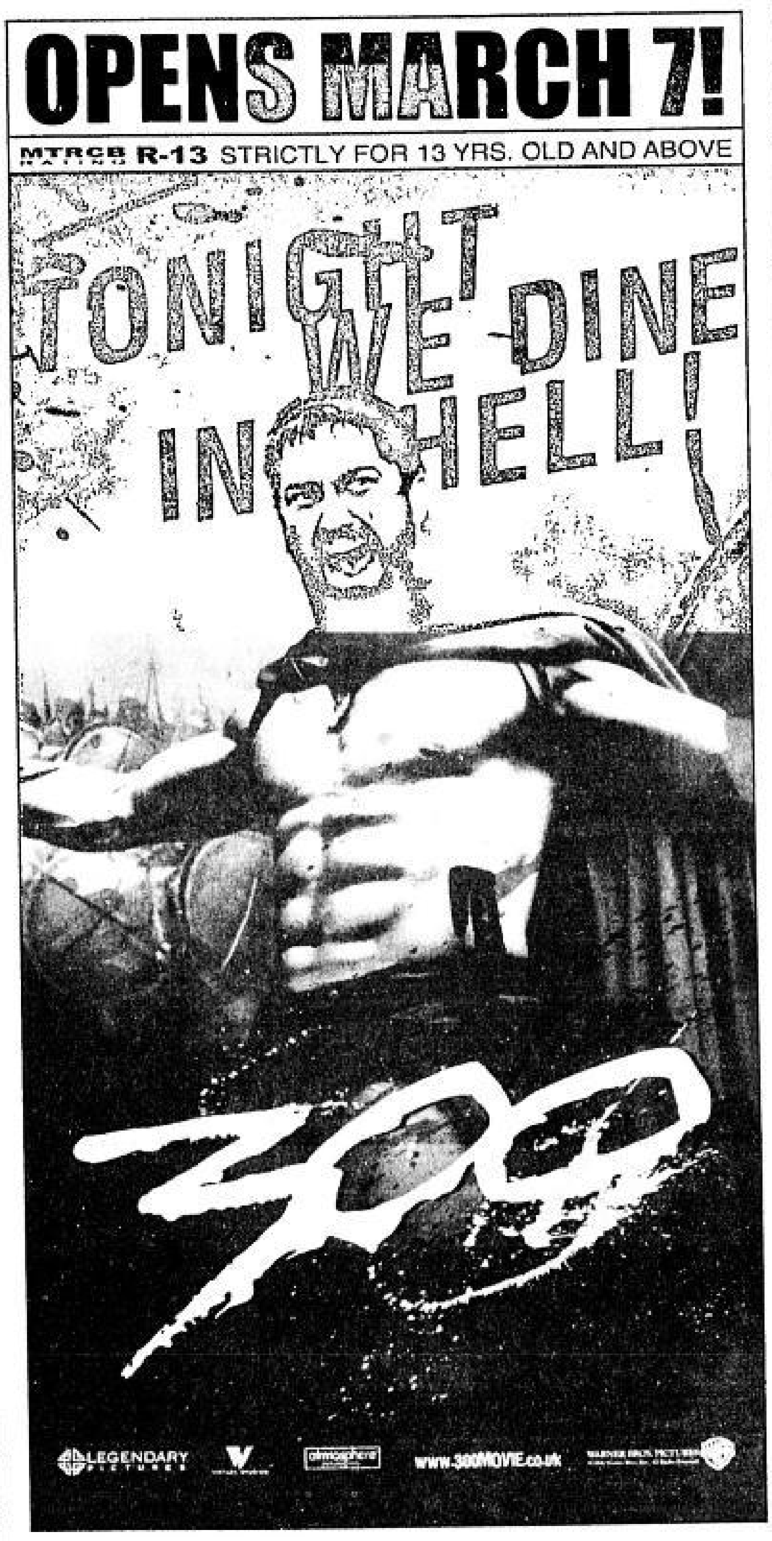
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4 PRIMEVAL

starmall

(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160

3 PRIMEVAL
4 GHOST RIDER
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema

(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL

THEATRES

1 MUSIC & LYRICS
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC

YOU GOT ME
BABEL
RESRVED
RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA

(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 GHOST RIDER
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 PRIMEVAL
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 YOU GOT ME
9 NUMBER 23
10 THE PROMISE

Blue Wave MARIKINA

Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Nino, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY) FLUSHED AWAY
2 (DOLBY) PRIMEVAL
3 (DOLBY) YOU GOT ME
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE PROMISE
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

MARKETPLACE

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 THE PROMISE
2 THE MESSENGER
3 TROIKA
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA

(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER

Center Mall Cinema

Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4440346)

1 PRIMEVAL
2 APOCALYPTO

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

Centre Plaza Cinema

(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 THE MESSENGER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 PRIMEVAL
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 IT'S A BOY THING

CINEMA 2000

Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PRIMEVAL
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall

(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix

(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown

(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE PROMISE
3 BABEL
4 APOCALYPTO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema

(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 TROIKA
2 THE PROMISE

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 SAPLOT
3 LITTLE CHILDREN
4 THE MESSENGER

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 YOU GOT ME
2 RED ROSES
3 THE PROMISE
4 TROIKA
5 THE PROMISE

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 CODENAME THE CLEANER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema

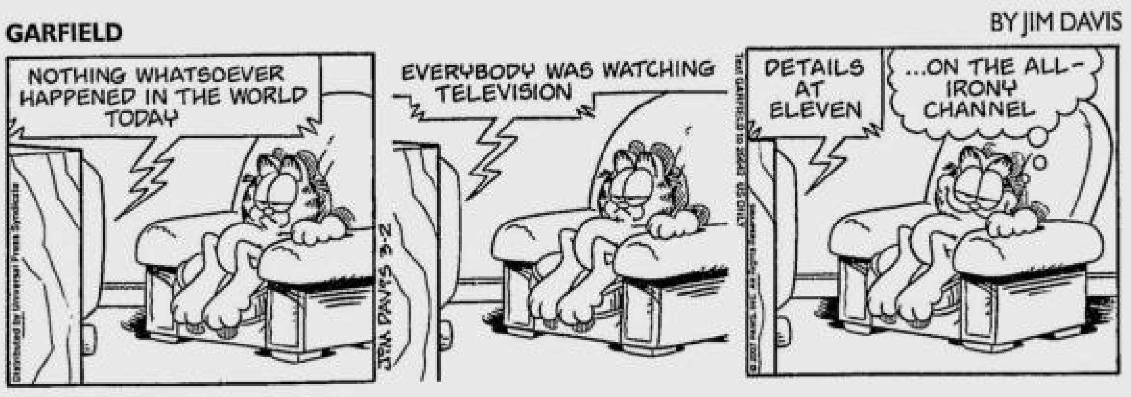
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 TROIKA
2 THE MESSENGER

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

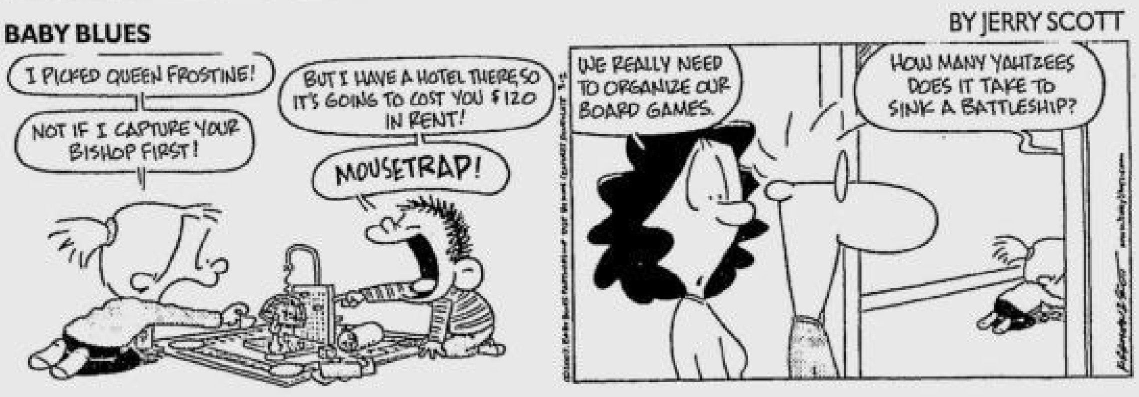
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


NOTHING WHATSOEVER HAPPENED IN THE WORLD TODAY
EVERYBODY WAS WATCHING TELEVISION
DETAILS AT ELEVEN
...ON THE ALL-IRONY CHANNEL
JIM DAVIS 3-2

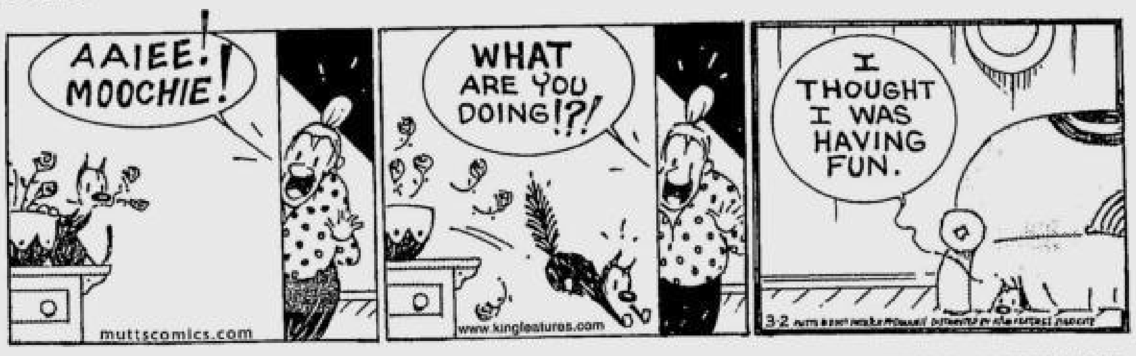
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I PICKED QUEEN FROSTINE!
NOT IF I CAPTURE YOUR BISHOP FIRST!
BUT I HAVE A HOTEL THERE SO IT'S GOING TO COST YOU $120 IN RENT!
MOUSETRAP!
WE REALLY NEED TO ORGANIZE OUR BOARD GAMES.
HOW MANY YAHTZEES DOES IT TAKE TO SINK A BATTLESHIP?

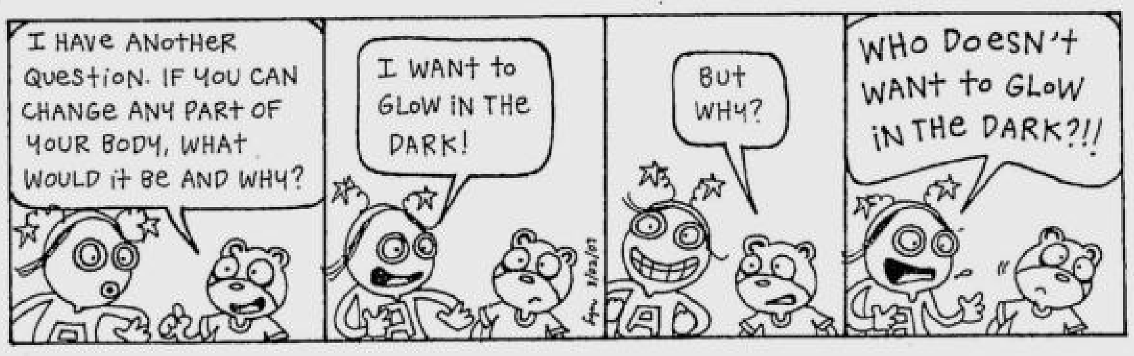
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


AAIEE! MOOCHIE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?!
I THOUGHT I WAS HAVING FUN.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com

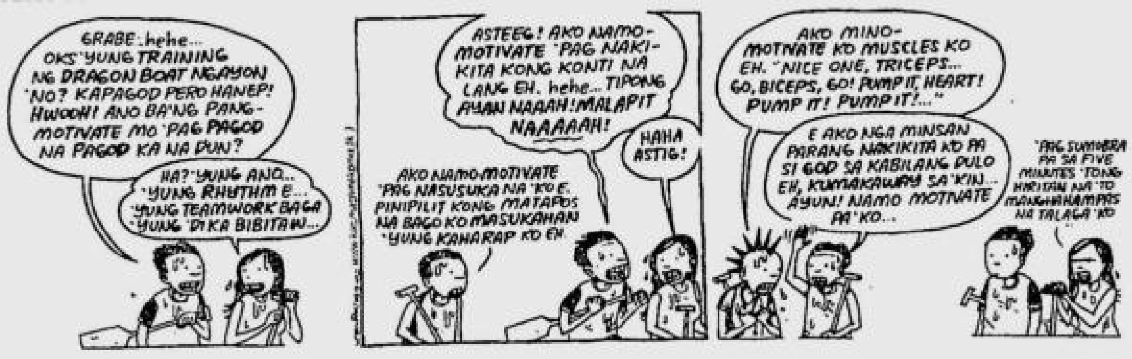
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I HAVE ANOTHER QUESTION. IF YOU CAN CHANGE ANY PART OF YOUR BODY, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?
I WANT TO GLOW IN THE DARK!
BUT WHY?
WHO DOESN'T WANT TO GLOW IN THE DARK?!!

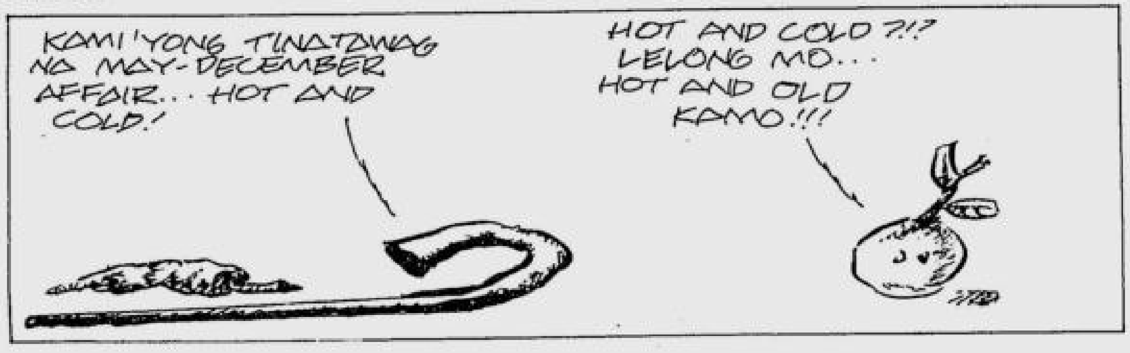
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE. hehe... OKS 'YUNG TRAINING NG DRAGON BOAT NGAYON 'NO? KAPAGOD PERO HANEP! HWOOH! ANO BA'NG PANG-MOTIVATE MO 'PAG PAGOD NA PAGOD KA NA DUN?
HA? 'YUNG ANO... 'YUNG RHYTHM E... 'YUNG TEAMWORK BAGA 'YUNG 'DI KA BIBITAW...
AKO NAMO-MOTIVATE 'PAG NASUSUKA NA 'KO E. PINIPILIT KONG MATAPOS NA BAGO KO MASUKAHAN 'YUNG KAHARAP KO EH.
ASTEEG! AKO NAMO-MOTIVATE 'PAG NAKIKITA KONG KONTI NA LANG EH. hehe... TIPONG AYAN NAAAH! MALAPIT NAAAAAH!
HAHA ASTIG!
AKO MINO-MOTIVATE KO MUSCLES KO EH. "NICE ONE, TRICEPS... GO, BICEPS, GO! PUMP IT, HEART! PUMP IT! PUMP IT!..."
E AKO NGA MINSAN PARANG NAKIKITA KO PA SI GOD SA KABILANG DULO EH, KUMAKAWAY SA 'KIN... AYUN! NAMO MOTIVATE PA 'KO...
'PAG SUMOBRA PA SA FIVE MINUTES 'TONG KIRITAN NA 'TO MANGHAHAMPAS NA TALAGA 'KO

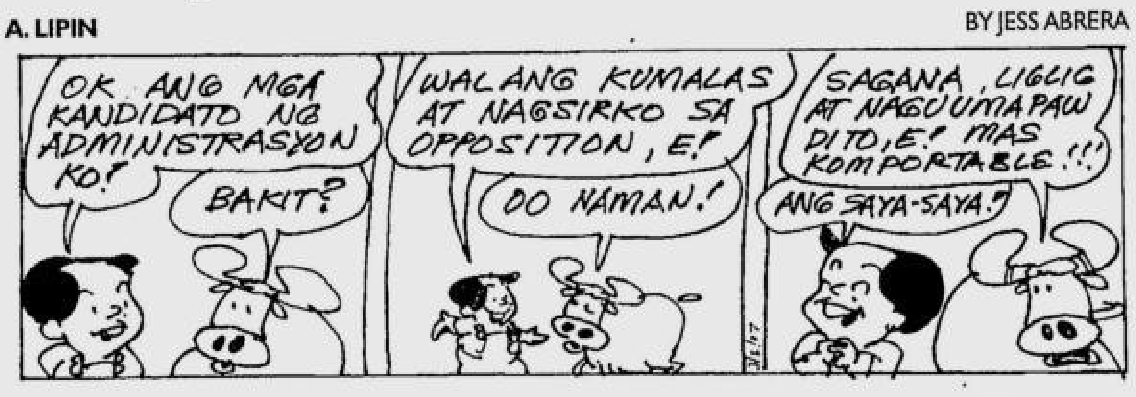
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KAMI 'YONG TINATAWAG NA MAY-DECEMBER AFFAIR... HOT AND COLD!
HOT AND COLD ?!? LELONG MO... HOT AND OLD KAMO!!!

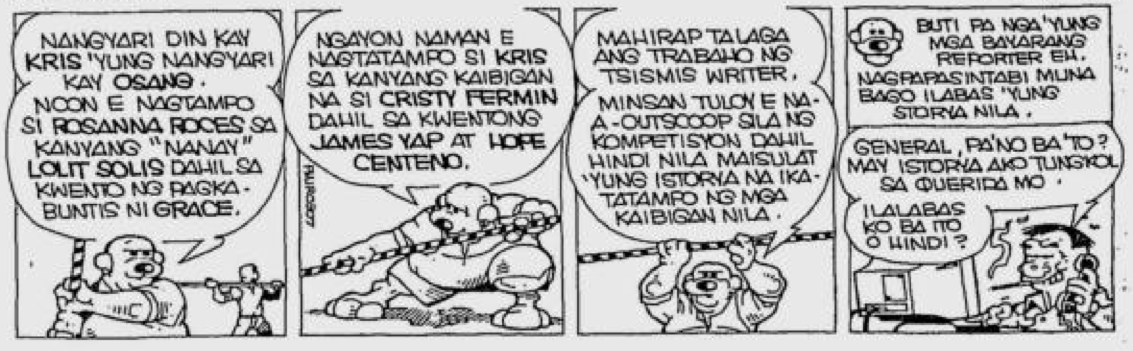
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


OK ANG MGA KANDIDATO NG ADMINISTRASYON KO!
BAKIT?
WALANG KUMALAS AT NAGSIRKO SA OPPOSITION, E!
OO NAMAN!
SAGANA, LIGLIG AT NAGUUMAPAW DITO, E! MAS KOMPORTABLE!!!
ANG SAYA-SAYA!

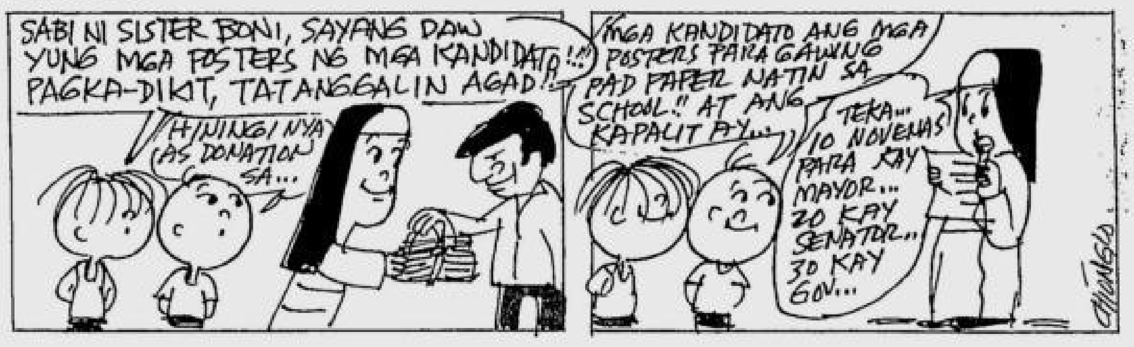
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NANGYARI DIN KAY KRIS 'YUNG NANGYARI KAY OSANG. NOON E NAGTAMPO SI ROSANNA ROCES SA KANYANG "NANAY" LOLIT SOLIS DAHIL SA KWENTO NG PAGKA-BUNTIS NI GRACE.
NGAYON NAMAN E NAGTATAMPO SI KRIS SA KANYANG KAIBIGAN NA SI CRISTY FERMIN DAHIL SA KWENTONG JAMES YAP AT HOPE CENTENO.
MAHIRAP TALAGA ANG TRABAHO NG TSISMIS WRITER. MINSAN TULOY E NA-A-OUTSCOOP SILA NG KOMPETISYON DAHIL HINDI NILA MAISULAT 'YUNG ISTORYA NA IKA-TATAMPO NG MGA KAIBIGAN NILA.
BUTI PA NGA 'YUNG MGA BAYARANG REPORTER EH. NAGPAPASINTABI MUNA BAGO ILABAS 'YUNG STORYA NILA.
GENERAL, PA'NO BA 'TO? MAY ISTORYA AKO TUNGKOL SA QUERIDA MO.
ILALABAS KO BA ITO O HINDI?

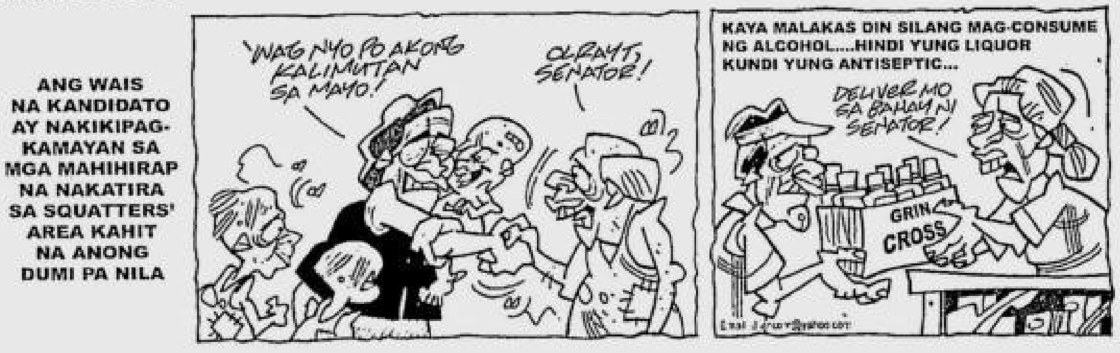
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SABI NI SISTER BONI, SAYANG DAW YUNG MGA POSTERS NG MGA KANDIDATO!!! PAGKA-DIKIT, TATANGGALIN AGAD!
HININGI NYA AS DONATION SA...
MGA KANDIDATO ANG MGA POSTERS PARA GAWING PAD PAPER NATIN SA SCHOOL!! AT ANG KAPALIT AY...
TEKA... 10 NOVENAS PARA KAY MAYOR... 20 KAY SENATOR... 30 KAY GOV...
CHIONGLO

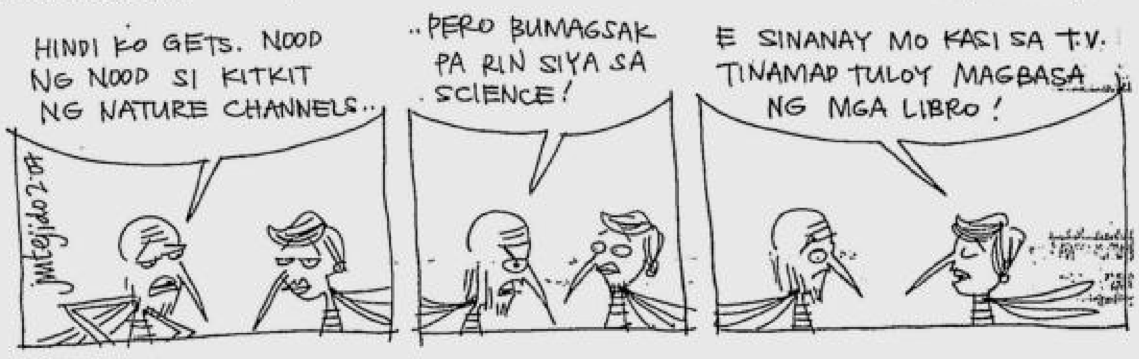
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ANG WAIS NA KANDIDATO AY NAKIKIPAG-KAMAYAN SA MGA MAHIHIRAP NA NAKATIRA SA SQUATTERS' AREA KAHIT NA ANONG DUMI PA NILA
'WAG NYO PO AKONG KALIMUTAN SA MAYO!
OLRAYT, SENATOR!
KAYA MALAKAS DIN SILANG MAG-CONSUME NG ALCOHOL....HINDI YUNG LIQUOR KUNDI YUNG ANTISEPTIC...
DELIVER MO SA BAHAY NI SENATOR!
GRIN CROSS

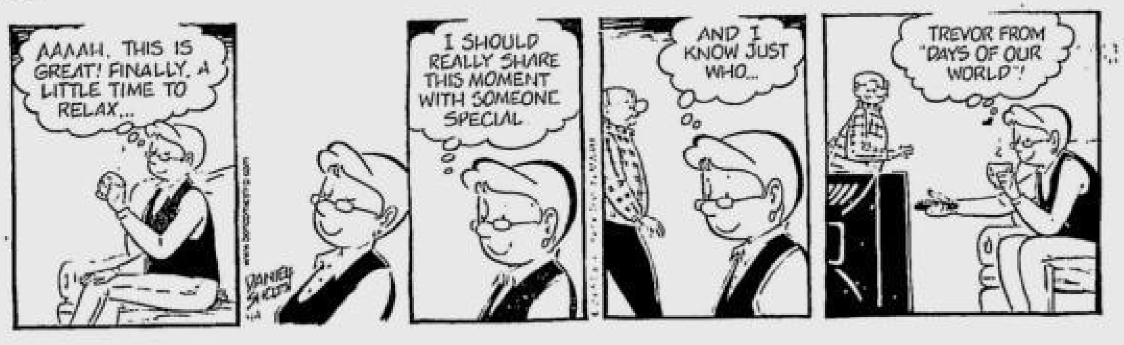
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HINDI KO GETS. NOOD NG NOOD SI KITKIT NG NATURE CHANNELS..
..PERO BUMAGSAK PA RIN SIYA SA SCIENCE!
E SINANAY MO KASI SA T.V. TINAMAD TULOY MAGBASA NG MGA LIBRO!
jmtejido 2.07

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


AAAAH. THIS IS GREAT! FINALLY, A LITTLE TIME TO RELAX...
I SHOULD REALLY SHARE THIS MOMENT WITH SOMEONE SPECIAL
AND I KNOW JUST WHO...
TREVOR FROM "DAYS OF OUR WORLD"!
DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Shimon of Israel
6 Salad bar offering
11 Resistance unit
14 Put forth effort
15 Video game pioneer
16 Shade of green
17 First part of parenting advice
19 Sea eagle
20 Mai __ cocktail
21 Low-lying wetland
22 Weld in Hollywood
24 Bitter conflict
26 Strapped
27 Japanese warrior
29 Make intrusive remarks
32 Richie's mom, to the Fonz
35 Has a feeling
37 Pupil's location
38 Wash up
40 Fruity cooler
41 Pulp fictioneers
43 Big galoot
44 Dan Fogelberg hit
47 Borscht veggie
48 Well-grounded
50 Bring together
52 Kind of name or voyage
54 Stick weapon
58 Very sharp turn
60 Carried the day
61 Outback bird
62 Royal pronoun
63 Portable warmer
66 Con's opposite
67 Big name in paper
68 Avignon's river
69 Writer Fleming
70 Dozed on
71 Uses emery

DOWN
1 Nuisances
2 Former Amer. citizen
3 Rebroadcast
4 Do wrong
5 Graf of tennis
6 Road to Berlin
7 Devoured
8 Magna __
9 Satirical writer P.J. __
10 Entremets
11 Newspaper essay
12 Wife of Zeus
13 Quite a few
18 Soon-to-be adults
23 Fill in
25 Foot part
26 Weapon that's this puzzle's theme
28 Stapleton or Smart
30 Little fella
31 Piquancy
32 Wharton degs.
33 Absorbed
34 Pressing device
36 Witnessed
39 Marks of omission
42 In the sack
45 Of a Freudian relationship
46 Big name in copiers
49 Saloon
51 Radio receivers
53 Maternally related
55 Board
56 Fix up
57 Angler's gear
58 Arizona tribe
59 Ring of the holy
60 Took off
64 Flatfoot
65 Shout of triumph

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	9	10	■	11	12	13
14					■	15					■	16		
17					18						■	19		
20			■	21			■	22			23			
24			25			■	26						■	■
■	■	■	27			28		■	29				30	31
32	33	34		■	35			36			■	37		
38				39	■	40			■	41	42			
43			■	44	45				46	■	47			
48			49			■	50			51		■	■	■
■	■	52				53		■	54			55	56	57
58	59						■	60			■	61		
62			■	63			64				65			
66			■	67					■	68				
69			■	70					■	71				

By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH

3/2/07

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

P	E	E	L	■	M	I	S	C	■	C	A	D	R	E
L	A	D	Y	■	I	D	O	L	■	A	R	E	A	S
U	S	E	R	■	S	L	U	E	■	T	A	L	C	S
G	E	N	I	U	S	E	S	A	R	E	L	I	K	E
■	■	■	■	C	A	P	■	A	V	E	R	■	■	■
P	F	C	■	R	E	D	■	E	V	E	R	E	S	T
L	A	H	R	■	L	I	E	■	■	R	A	T	I	O
O	C	E	A	N	L	I	N	E	R	S	T	H	E	Y
P	E	E	V	E	■	■	S	H	E	■	S	A	G	E
S	T	R	I	P	E	D	■	S	T	E	■	N	E	D
■	■	■	■	A	D	E	S	■	R	E	S	■	■	■
S	H	O	U	L	D	N	E	V	E	R	M	E	E	T
L	A	D	L	E	■	I	D	E	A	■	A	R	A	B
A	L	I	A	S	■	A	G	E	D	■	S	I	R	S
P	E	N	N	E	■	L	E	S	S	■	H	E	L	P

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3/2/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a marvelous imagination. You're also hardworking and persevering. With this combination, you can create wonderful things for the world. You also have a strong loyalty to what you value. This makes you noble in the eyes of others. But you're not rigid. You understand how change works. Expect a change this year, perhaps as significant as something around 1998.
Birthdate of: Jon Bon Jovi, musician; Lou Reed, singer; Daniel Craig, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be patient with co-workers today, because you will no doubt feel a buildup of tension before tomorrow's Full Moon. Fortunately, this kind of tension is gone in 48 hours.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Taurus makes the best parent, because you know the value of three square meals a day. However, tension before tomorrow's Full Moon might make you impatient with children and romantic partners. Be gentle.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): The tension before tomorrow's Full Moon could cause friction at home or within your family. Don't take the bait. Whatever irks you will pass within 48 hours. Remain agreeable.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Because of the tension today (before tomorrow's Full Moon) you could become increasingly accident-prone. Therefore, slow down. Take a deep breath. Pay attention.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Increasing money concerns might put your teeth on edge. However, by next week, much of this will be resolved. Have faith in your future.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Tomorrow's Full Moon is in your sign. This is the only Full Moon in Virgo all year. It will make you a bit tense dealing with partners and close friends. (No big deal, really.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't worry if you feel vaguely out of sorts today. This is the buildup before tomorrow's Full Moon, and it takes place in an obscure part of your chart (behind your left knee).

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might experience some tension dealing with friends and groups today. Do not overreact. The problem will greatly diminish by Monday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Tomorrow's Full Moon will create tension with bosses, parents and VIPs. However, do not flip anyone the bird. Cool your jets.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Avoid religious and political discussions with others because they could become overheated. Oh yes! (Make your words sweet in case you have to eat them later.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't get your belly in a rash about financial matters or shared possessions today. This will all work itself out by Monday. Until then, maintain cruise control.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Tomorrow's Full Moon opposes your sign. This is the only time all year. That's why you'll feel increasing tension with partners and close friends. Don't worry—it's over by Monday.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			9					
	6						2	
1		8	4		3	5		7
		4				7		3
				7				
2		7				1		
6		3	1		5	2		8
	8						6	
					4			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

3/02

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

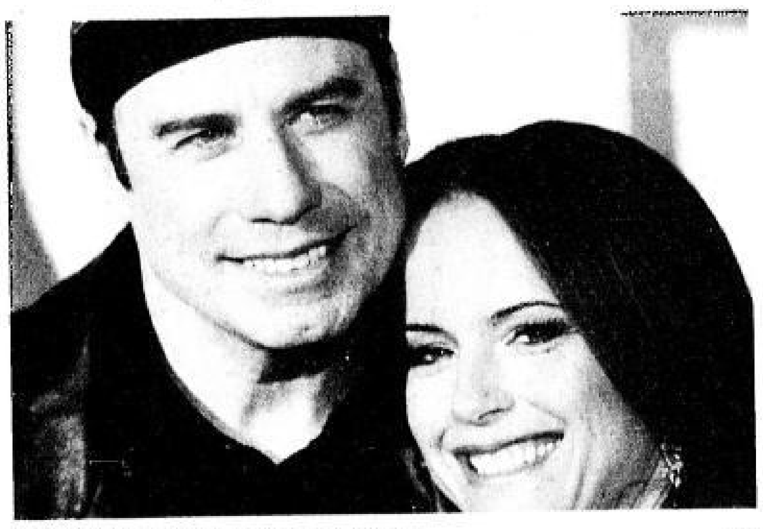
Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	4	6	9	8	3	5	7	1
1	9	8	7	4	5	6	3	2
3	7	5	1	2	6	4	9	8
8	1	7	2	3	4	9	5	6
6	3	2	5	9	8	1	4	7
9	5	4	6	1	7	2	8	3
5	2	1	3	7	9	8	6	4
7	8	9	4	6	1	3	2	5
4	6	3	8	5	2	7	1	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

A LOT LIKE LOVE



JOHN Travolta and wife Kelly Preston AFP

MELISSA Ethridge and partner Tammy Lynn Michaels REUTERS

GUY Ritchie with his wife Madonna REUTERS

JENNIFER Lopez and husband Marc Anthony REUTERS

ELLEN DeGeneres, Portia de Rossi and Ellen's mom Betty DeGeneres REUTERS

FAVORITE NOOKS

ARA MINA

The entertainment room is very Zen, with gray walls and minimalist design. I've always been partial to masculine designs. This is where I hang out, spend time on DVDs and the Magic Sing. I set up a flat-screen TV and digital-surround system speakers in this soundproof room. I like watching horror movies and the TV show "Grey's Anatomy" here. It's also where I keep my collection of toy cars and angels and my guitar that bears my portrait—it was made by Don-Jon Guitars of Pampanga.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

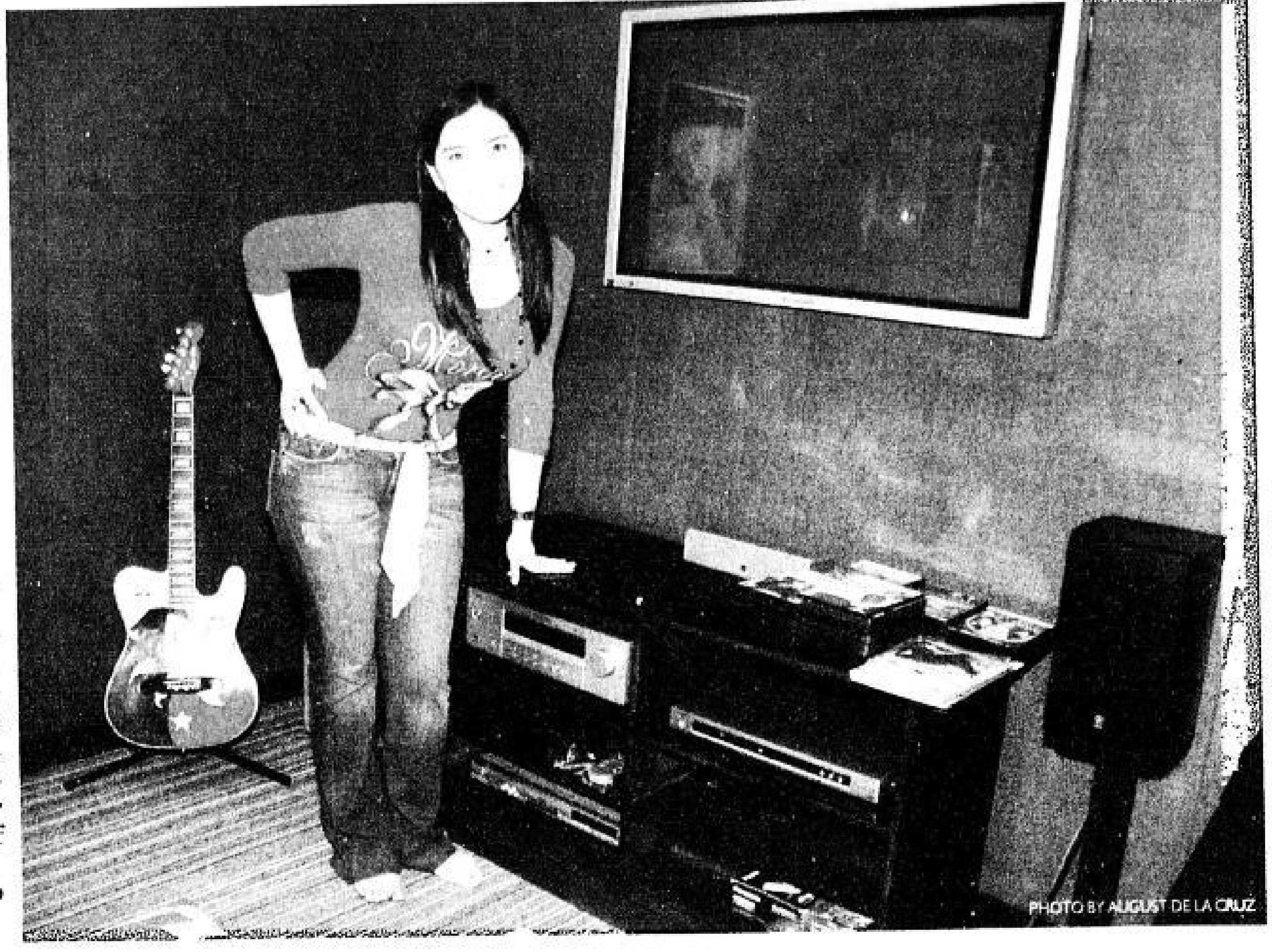


PHOTO BY AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

Dawn's mommy moments

As mom to her one-year-old son Jacobo, actress Dawn Zulueta says she's "quite hands on," taking over from the nanny during on days off from work.

"When I have shootings, I need to sleep early, without disturbance. So his nanny has to watch over Jacobo, feed him during the night and bathe him in the morning. But as soon as I get even just a couple of days off, I take over," says Dawn. She adds that her husband Anton shares in the task as well.

The actress recounts that she needed the assistance of a neonatal nurse during Jacobo's first few months, since he had been born prematurely.

Lately, she has been shuttling between Davao and Manila and back for her TV commitments. She is also the endorser of Gain Plus Advance, the milk formula recommended by Jacobo's pediatrician.

DAWN Zulueta with her son Jacobo

'Paraiso ni Maryo'

From page 12

In the living room and strategic corners are showcased his collection of masks from numerous travels abroad—from Korea to Mexico, from Japan to New York.

In the nipa hut are lined up miniature masks from Bacolod's Masskara Festival.

Likewise strewn all over the place are framed posters of his movies, the only reminders of show biz in this refuge.

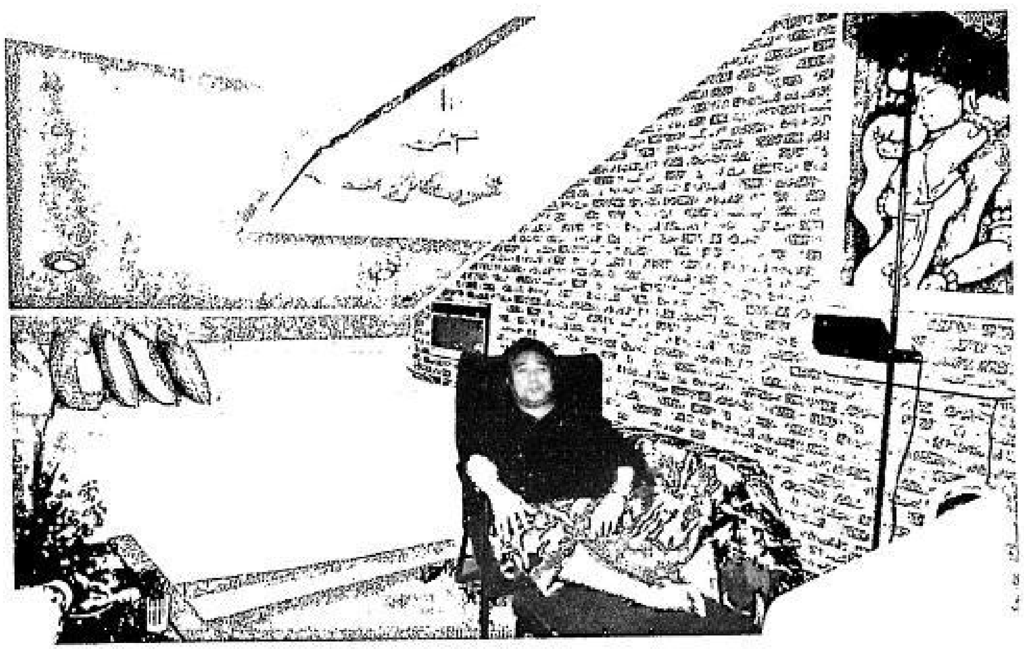
He could use a break just now, as he starts work on a new Star Cinema movie, tentatively titled "I Don't Want You to Go," with Aga Muhlach, Angelica Panganiban and Maricel Soriano.

Apart from his bedroom, another favorite is the Blue Room, where "it's very quiet."

He is planning to set up a Balinese spa-massage area.

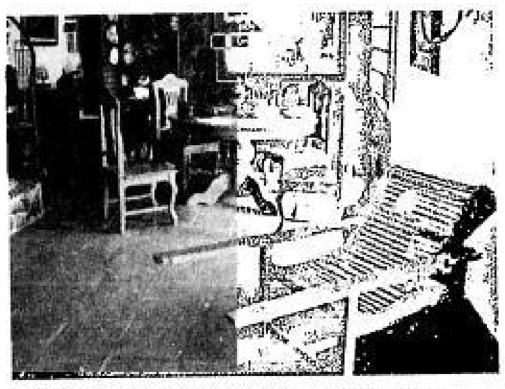
Meanwhile, he has called the place Studio 56, and opened it for a few dear friends' gatherings. Cesar Montano, Rez Cortez, Christopher de Leon and Al Tantay have brought their families here.

Maryo points out, "This place is meant to be shared."

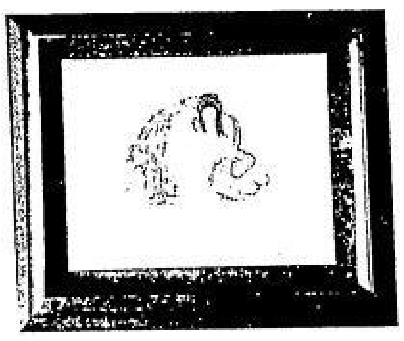


THE BLUE room is the most relaxing area in the house, he says.

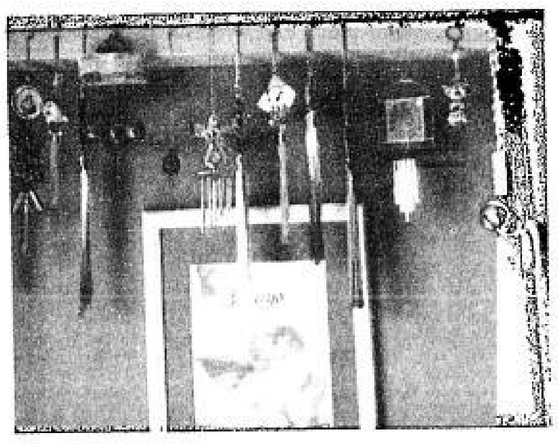
A COLLECTION of portraits and caricatures done by artist-friends.



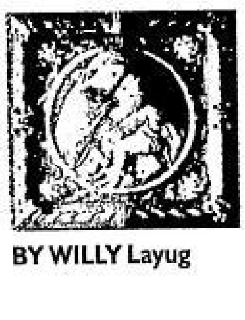
THE LIVING room features a *butaca*, an antique birthing chair, from Bohol.



BY ANNA Marie Gutierrez



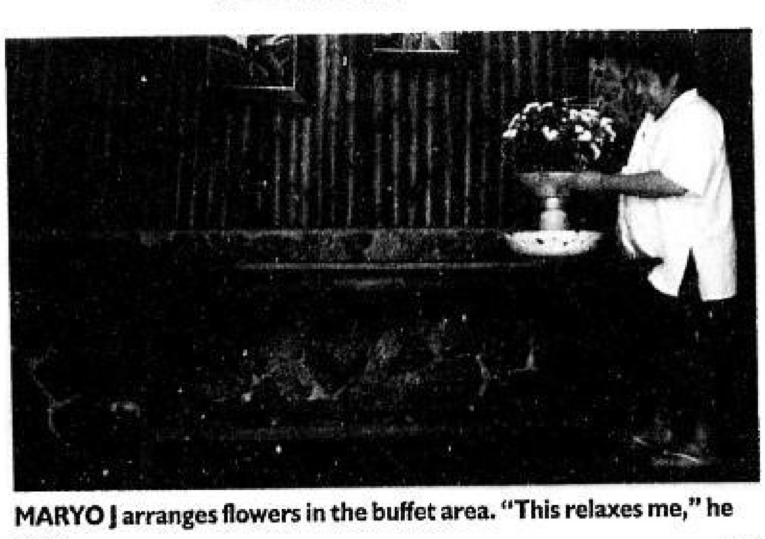
WIND chimes from all over



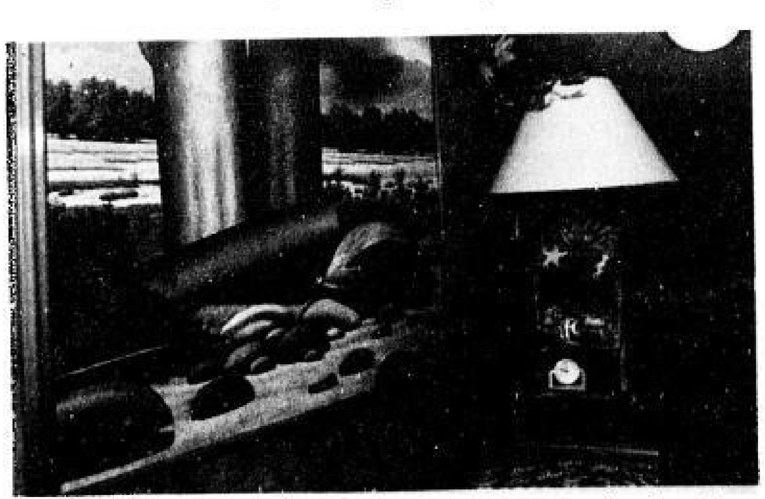
BY WILLY Layug

THERE'S a pool and Jacuzzi.

IN THE café-lounge, with pet Viggo and friend Honey Tirona.



MARYO J arranges flowers in the buffet area. "This relaxes me," he says.



THE PAINTING is by Ballesteros; the *halo-halo* ice-crusher lamp is from Baguio.

At the Vanity Fair after-Oscars bash

PARTY! PARTY!

RACHEL GRIFFITHS REUTERS

NAOMI CAMPBELL REUTERS

AL Gore and wife Tipper REUTERS

GAVIN Rossdale and Gwen Stefani REUTERS

OPRAH Winfrey and Mary J. Blige REUTERS

SACHA Baron Cohen and girlfriend Isla Fisher REUTERS

SHARON Stone, above REUTERS

ZIYI Zhang, left REUTERS

FOREST Whitaker and wife Keisha AFP

MARTIN Scorsese and wife Helen Morris REUTERS

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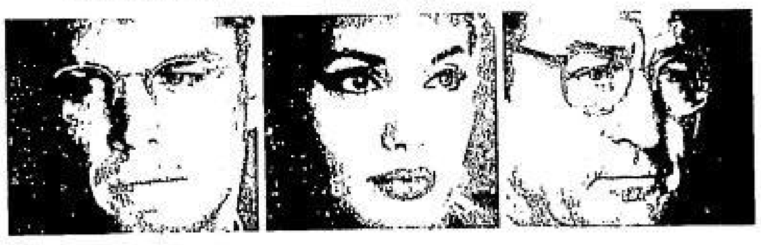

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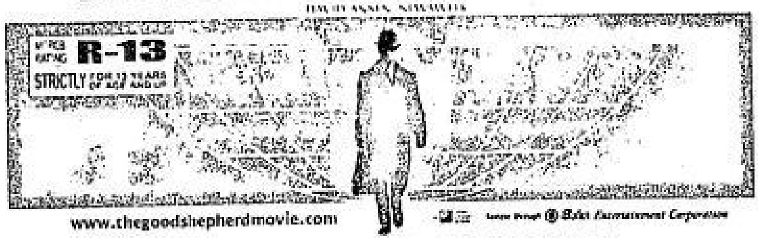
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FLUSHED AWAY 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00	BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA 3:20 / 7:40	NUMBER 23 1:10 / 5:30 / 9:50	
EPIC MOVIE 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40	GHOST RIDER 2:20 / 4:50 / 7:20 / 9:50	MUSIC & LYRICS 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 2:15 / 4:30 / 6:45 / 9:00

ALIMALL 5

1	PRIMEVAL 1:15 / 3:35 / 5:55 / 8:15	2	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:20 / 3:35 / 5:50 / 8:05	3	YOU GOT ME 12:00 R3 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
4	THE PROMISE 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20	5	GHOST RIDER 1:05 / 3:35 / 6:05 / 8:35		DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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1	PRIMEVAL	1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00	R-13
2	FLUSHED AWAY	2:00, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 10:55	G
3	YOU GOT ME	2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:00	G
4	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	PG-13

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